

Foul-ups halt comparison of party membership lists

IT WILL only be next week when names registered in more than one party become known. The process of comparing party membership rolls was to begin and end yesterday morning, but it will take longer.

A simple computer scan, which should have taken several hours at most, resulted in wrangles, accompanied by technical hitches and human error.

But the crunch came when many small parties simply failed to turn in their membership rolls at the appointed time. The registrar of parties finally gave up and announced that the results will only be in next week.

The process was necessitated by legislation growing out of the primary system. The idea is to weed out those who registered for more than one party, prior to deciding who is eligible to vote in the primaries of a given party. Those whose name appears on more than membership list will be notified in writing and asked to indicate within 10

SARAH HONIG

days which party they choose. They will be eligible to participate in the primaries only if they reply in time.

The first surprise was sprung by the Likud. After Labor had brought in a computer disk with 280,000 names, the Likud entered with 291,000. This made Labor representatives angry, as they had expected only 187,000 Likud members. It turned out that the Likud had included not only dues-paying members.

Labor and Meretz representatives screamed foul, charging the Likud was trying to "steal" their members by entering the names of people who may have once belonged to the Likud, but had since switched parties.

The Likud representative also offered the registrar a disk with the names of only dues-paying members, and asked him to choose which one was acceptable. The registrar finally ruled that the Likud's first entry of

291,000 names applies according to the law, as party members need not necessarily be dues-payers, but those the party allows to participate in its internal elections.

The next hitch appeared when the Likud disk was inserted in the computer and was found wanting. Due to an error, the final control digit of the members' ID card numbers was missing. The disk went back to Likud headquarters and was quickly updated.

The National Religious Party brought a disk with 120,000 names; Meretz one with 41,000 names; Tsomet with 10,000; and Shas with a mere 150.

But none of the other parties presented their lists, causing the registrar to put off the final scan, in which the computer will go through all names and pick out those who appear in several parties, as well as those whose ID numbers may be incorrect or whose identities are bogus.



Meretz Knesset faction chairman Ran Cohen (left) presents his party's membership list to the registrar of parties yesterday.

Amital: I will not run for Knesset

MINISTER Without Portfolio Yehuda Amital said yesterday that he does not intend to run for the Knesset as a candidate for Meimad or any other party.

Meimad's executive council is to discuss tonight whether to submit a list of candidates, according to Rabbi Michael Melchior, its chairman.

Channel 2 reported last night that Meimad is considering running on a joint ticket with the Third Way. Third Way leader Avigdor Kahalani said he would welcome the move, the report added.

HAIM SHAPIRO

Amital said last night on Channel 1 that if Meimad does decide to run, it will have to join a ticket with another party.

Amital, who was speaking earlier at a press conference to report on his visit to the US, said that the ban on meeting with him, issued by a group of Orthodox rabbis, actually had a boomerang effect and resulted in his receiving a more sympathetic hearing among mainstream Orthodox Jews.

The halachic ruling had been

issued by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, a group which Amital described as a small extremist organization. The ban, he said, had been issued ostensibly because Amital met with the Unity Forum, a group of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform rabbis in New York, established to encourage dialogue between the different streams of Judaism.

However, he added, it was clear that opposition to the peace process also played a part in the ruling. In fact, he said, he had found considerable support for the peace process among the Orthodox public, both rabbis and lay people. He noted that many of the Orthodox leaders did not know what was happening in Israel.

Amital met with American Jewish groups and also with several Christian leaders. Among them was Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, who told him that the peace process in the Middle East was having a beneficial effect on such trouble spots as Northern Ireland and Bosnia.

Meanwhile, Melchior released the results of an opinion poll which seemed to indicate that in contrast to the last election, Meimad now could garner far more than the 1.5 percent of the votes necessary to achieve Knesset representation. The poll, conducted by Modiin Ezrachi, showed that 1.9% of those questioned said they were sure they would vote for Meimad if it tendered a list for the coming elections. Another 3.3% said they thought they would vote for Meimad.

When the respondents were asked whether they would vote for Meimad if its leadership included non-religious personalities, 2.2% said they would certainly vote for Meimad and another 6.2% said that they thought they would.

Zvilli stirs furor over Jordan Valley pullout remark

PRIME Minister Shimon Peres took issue yesterday with Labor Party secretary-general Nissim Zvilli, who reportedly said the party intends to change its platform to enable the uprooting of Jordan Valley settlements.

"As a party we have no intention of uprooting settlements," Peres told reporters, saying that reports to the contrary are "without foundation."

"The Jordan River will remain our security border; we have no intention of uprooting any settlements from there," Peres said.

Zvilli was quoted in the press as saying there is no certainty that the Jordan Valley settlements will be within the "red lines" that Israel will fight over during negotiations with the Palestinians. He said the Jordan Valley will not be transferred to the Palestinian Authority, but will remain under Israeli control as a military zone, not necessarily an area with settlements.

Zvilli backtracked a bit yesterday, saying both that his words were taken out of context and that the party plank will not have a clause calling for the uprooting of the settlements. His comments infuriated Jordan Valley set-

HERB KEINON

tlement activists. David Elhayani, head of the Jordan Valley Settlement Committee, called upon the party "to throw out those who talk in terms that directly contradict the party's platform."

Elhayani called on Peres to categorically state that Zvilli's comment do not reflect the party's stand. He said that Zvilli's remarks did not come as a surprise, and that Zvilli had told him the same thing in a private meeting about a month ago.

Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tzur said that the statements are not "coincidental," and that for a "long time there have been those in Labor who deal with the Jordan Valley as having the unclear status of a security zone, and not as a zone that will remain under Israeli sovereignty, and where there will be Israeli settlements."

Hanan Pasternak, a Labor Party member who has lived in Netiv Hagdud for 22 years, said he was shocked by Zvilli's comments, which represent the sentiments of a large number of party decision makers.

"If they are talking about withdrawing from the Golan, all the way to the Kinneret, why should we think the settlements in the Jordan Valley are safe," Pasternak said.

"The Labor Party sent us here," Pasternak said. "People like Zvilli said we were an important security factor. People came and devoted their lives to the area. I would think that those same people who sent us would have the courage to come tell us now, try to convince us, that our presence here is not necessary."

Pasternak termed the mood in the Jordan Valley settlements as "very bad. What Zvilli said makes matters for people even worse," he said. "It is as if we are living with a dagger at our hearts, as if we should be sitting on our suitcases."

Liav Collins adds:

MK Gedalya Gal (Labor) sent an urgent letter to Peres calling on him to immediately reject the idea of including a clause on evacuating Jordan Valley settlements in the party's new platform.

Gal, who heads the Knesset's Jordan Valley caucus, asked for a urgent meeting with Peres and settlement heads.

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of our beloved

RACHEL (Ray) GUTTENTAG

on Wednesday, 24 Tevet 5756.

The funeral will take place at the Sanhedria Funeral Parlor today, Thursday, February 15, at 1:00 p.m.

Mourning by her children:
Max and Eva Guttentag, Sunderland
Freda and Solly Steinberg, Jerusalem
Sam and Mathilde Guttentag, Jerusalem
Leo Guttentag, London

Grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, brothers and sisters.
Families Winegarten, Howitt, Shisha, and Neuberger

Shiva at the Guttentag residence, 17 Rehov Brand, Har Nof, Jerusalem.

The Shaare Zedek Medical Center
Board of Directors
International Board of Governors
mourn the passing of

SHELDON K. BEREN

whose love for Torah and Yiddishkeit was exemplary.

We recall his visit to the dedication of the Harry H. Beren Department of Cardiology and his deep appreciation of Shaare Zedek's compassionate care for its patients.

We extend to the family our "kos tanchumim"
המקום יתנם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

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Charles H. Bendheim, Chairman, Executive Committee
Menno Ratzker, Chairman, Int. Board of Governors
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The Open University
extends deep condolences to

Ruth Ruzga

on the passing of her

Mother 57

We extend our deepest condolences to the family of

Dr. YITZHAK (Jacques) ZACHARIAS BARUCH

Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau
Chairman, Likud Netherlands
Life-President, Dutch Union of General Zionists
President, the Union of Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Holland

J. BOOSMAN Vice-Chairman Likud Netherlands
S.L. VAZ DIAS General-Secretary Likud Netherlands

Pending bills would cost NIS 20 billion

Jerusalem Post Staff

THE estimated cost of implementing Knesset members' private bills that have passed their preliminary and first readings is NIS 16.5 billion annually, plus another one-time outlay of NIS 4b., Treasury Budget Director Ron Kroll said yesterday.

A document prepared by the budget division shows that about 100 bills are pending that have budgetary significance. Some of the costliest:

- National Insurance Institute - NIS 5.48b. a year;
- Education - NIS 4.22b. yearly, plus a one-time expenditure of NIS 4b.;
- Social welfare - NIS 1b. yearly, plus a one-time outlay of NIS 40m.;
- Communications - NIS 500m. a year;
- Transportation - NIS 1.5b. a year;
- Local authorities - NIS 530m. a year;
- Health - NIS 410m. a year;
- Housing - NIS 2.8b. a year.

Sderot officially a city

The status of Sderot was formally changed from local council to city yesterday. Interior Minister Haim Ramon, who made the announcement at a dinner attended by Mayor David Boskila, former local council head and current Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz, and other dignitaries, said Sderot now has 20,000 inhabitants, having absorbed 9,000 new immigrants since 1990.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Likud, Levy's movement clash over election law changes

EVELYN GORDON

AN argument erupted in the Knesset Law Committee yesterday between the Likud and David Levy's movement over two changes in the elections law which the latter wanted.

The first would cancel the restrictions on MKs leaving their factions 100 days before the election. Currently, MKs who leave their factions are considered breakaways, and are ineligible for any party funding, unless a full third of the faction leaves to set up a new faction. If this restriction were abolished 100 days before the election, Levy and David Magen, who both plan to run in Levy's new party, could leave the Likud now and get three months' worth of party funding. The Likud, not surprisingly, opposes this idea, since it does not want to lose any money during campaign season.

The second change would alter the rules governing what letters parties can use to represent themselves on the ballots. Currently, if a party has ever used a certain letter, a new party that wishes to use this letter must obtain the first party's permission. Under the proposed change, the only body whose approval would be needed would be the Central Elections Commission, whose sole criteria would be whether allotting the desired letter to the new party might mislead people and cause voting errors.

The Law Committee initially approved both changes, but the Likud requested a revote, and managed to defeat both clauses the second time around. These provisions will therefore not be brought up in the plenum for first reading. However, Magen noted, they are very likely to be reinserted by the committee prior to the election bill's second reading, since committee chairman Dedi Zucker (Meretz) supports them. Alternatively, they could be added to the law via amendments in the plenum during the bill's second reading.

Education Ministry: Keep politics out of schools

BATSHEVA TSUR

THE Education Ministry has warned against the politicization of schools in the upcoming elections.

Noting that the schools were public buildings, ministry director-general Shoshani Shoshani said that they could not be used for political activities, especially during the primaries. Classes will still be in progress during the elections, he noted, and the pupils can not be exposed to political pressures.

Shoshani expressed special concern over the phenomenon which had occurred at the Blich school in Ramat Gan, where a mock elec-

Druse general strike passes quietly

DAVID RUDGE

THE 14th anniversary of the general strike by Golan Heights Druse in protest against the extension of Israeli law to the region passed quietly yesterday.

A large force of nearly 800 police, led by Northern Region Commander Amos Azani, was on duty in the Druse villages Majdal Shams, Mas'ada, Baka'atha and Ein Kinyeh, but there were no disturbances.

All shops and businesses were closed as Druse residents observed the day with what has become a traditional general strike. There were also parades in Mas'ada, Bu-

US upbeat on Syrian talks despite early elections

HILLEL KUTTLER WASHINGTON

PRIME Minister Shimon Peres's advancing of elections will have no effect on the substance of negotiations with Syria, beyond delaying the timing of a deal, a senior US official said.

Ever since Secretary of State Warren Christopher's trip to the region last week, the US has been emphasizing that it wants to maintain the momentum of the talks, even with the expected disruption caused by the early campaign.

Two rounds of talks at Maryland's Wye River Conference Center since late December have begun to "set into place an architecture of an agreement" and helped insulate the talks from potential damage due to the election, the official said.

He said the US peace team is "very relaxed," because the process "is secure enough that it will survive this interim period."

Asked whether the campaign period would have an effect on the negotiations, which are to reconvene from February 28 to March 5, the official said, "It's going to be hard to imagine how. The negotiations will not be a major component of the elections. Peres is seeking a mandate that is much broader... We've managed to create a new baseline on the basis of Wye."

Deputy Middle East coordinator Aaron Miller said Tuesday that an eventual Israeli-Syrian agreement is "clearly out there."

"The question is how long it's going to take. You've got an institutionalized structure of peace-

PNC head: Elections may delay PLO Covenant change

The Palestinian National Council Chairman hinted that the PNC may not change the PLO Covenant until after the Israeli elections.

"Early elections in Israel may change the time of the PNC meeting," expected in April, said Salim Zamoun, acting chairman of the PNC. "Israel will be busy at that time and it may be a reason for a change or delay." But other Palestinian officials said in return for revoking the key clauses in the covenant the Israeli government will be less inclined to make concessions, like supporting a Palestinian state, before the elections.

Mahmoud Abbas, considered a deputy to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, said recently that the Palestinian Authority is aware of the need to change the covenant before the Israeli elections. *Jon Inman*

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Sandfly spreading rare dog parasite

JUDY SEGEL

FIVE dogs in the area between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have in recent months been diagnosed with leishmaniasis, a parasitic infection that has only now been restricted mainly to Arab villages in the Galilee and has apparently been spread by the sandfly. The Jerusalem Post has learned.

Veterinarians and infectious disease experts are concerned that the spread of the sandfly could lead to increased infection among children. Leishmaniasis is rarely transmitted to humans, however, and its usual symptom is a type of skin rash.

A Jerusalem-area veterinarian, Ephraim Keren, had to destroy an infected dog two days ago, since animals cannot be treated and the disease causes them considerable suffering.

"It definitely is something to be worried about, but there is no reason for panic," said Prof. Charles Jaffe, a leading leishmaniasis expert at the Hebrew University's Kuvim Center for the Study of Tropic and Infectious Diseases. Kuvim experts are preparing to take blood samples from dogs in the areas where infected dogs have been reported: Nufar near Modi'in (1); Nafat in the Judean Hills (three); and Sataf near Ein Kerem (1).

"This serological survey is important to find out how big the reservoir of dog carriers is, especially because we weren't aware of a problem in the Jerusalem area, and since Modi'in is a rapidly growing urban area," he said.

Health Ministry experts were unaware of the problem until queried by The Post yesterday, but the Environment Ministry has been informed about it.

Leishmaniasis is endemic to the Mediterranean Basin, said Jaffe. Unlike rabies, it is not easily transmitted from infected dogs to humans. "If a sandfly bites an infected dog, jackal, or other canine, it can transfer the parasite to another animal or to humans, especially children (adults generally develop immunity over time). The only means of direct transfer between animals and humans is by contact between their open wounds."

In most humans, infection results in a rash, which is annoying but easily treated. There were 74 reported cases last year, but it is estimated that actual cases are about five times that figure. There are three or four cases of the potentially more-serious systemic leishmaniasis here each year.

It is difficult to diagnose in dogs, as the skin condition is often covered by their fur. Among the symptoms are dandruff-like flakes, loss of weight, and loss of hair (especially around the ears). Dog owners should bring their dog to a vet immediately if it shows such symptoms.



Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss presents the Knesset Medal to Abed Shinawi, 10, son of Hassan Shinawi, a Gazan who donated his organs for transplant, thus saving four lives. Health Minister Ephraim Sneh also met with Shinawi's pregnant wife and two children. The Knesset arranged for a special permit to enable the family to visit despite the closure.

(Text: Liat Collins; Photo: Isaac Harari)

Jordanian official: Israel, Jordan, Palestinian water accord is meaningless

AMMAN (Reuters) - Jordan yesterday dismissed a water agreement signed in Norway by Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians as a meaningless document that ignores the need for water sharing.

"What they produced was a lukewarm, loose text that means nothing," said Dr. Mumber Haddadin, who oversaw Jordan's participation in the talks in Oslo and previously negotiated water aspects of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty.

"There is nothing in the text about water sharing so I wouldn't give it the importance

the reports indicated," he told Reuters.

Norway announced on Tuesday that Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority had initiated an agreement on water resources in the Middle East.

The declaration, following two years of talks organized by Norway, provides a framework for the principles for cooperation on water-related matters and new and additional water resources in the region.

However, the agreement did not deal with the allocation of water. Instead it dealt with cooperation for the management of re-

sources, such as upgrading pipelines and developing new sources of water such as desalination.

Norway said the agreement is expected to be signed in Oslo next month following approval from the respective authorities but Haddadin doubted it would be accepted.

He said signing an accord that did not address questions of water sharing between relatively well-supplied countries, such as Israel, and those already running out of water, like Jordan, could prevent conclusion of a more substantial regional water agreement.

EU wants role in Israeli-Syrian talks

News agencies

The European Union said yesterday the time has come for it to help with peace negotiations between Syria and Israel.

"We think the moment has come for Europe with the United States to help with the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track," Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli said after meeting with Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Prior to the three-member EU mission's departure for the Middle East, a senior EU official leaked to the French newspaper Liberation that the Europeans aim to increase pressure on Israel regarding the proposed General Security Service Law. According to the official, if the law is passed, the EU might halt economic aid to Israel, block Israeli access to EU research and development projects, and take other steps.

The official also mentioned a possible delay in the European Parliament's approval of the new economic agreement signed with Israel, which gives it special advantages. Peres last week rejected a call by the Swedish foreign minister to change the law.

The EU mission later met with the Palestinian Council President Yasser Arafat in Gaza to congratulate him on his election. Arafat told reporters he had discussed with the Europeans the losses caused to Palestinians by Israel's border closures.

"We are losing every day of the closure more than \$6 million and now in the last 15 months the closure has lasted 250 days," he said. "You can imagine that our losses from this closure are more than all income from all the donors and all the donations."

Donor nations pledged \$2.4 billion to the Palestinians in 1993 over a period of five years.

The EU mission on Tuesday met Syrian President Hafez Assad in Damascus. Agnelli said he appeared positive on forging peace with Israel.

Agnelli was accompanied by Spanish Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Emilio Fernandez Castano and Irish Minister of State at the Foreign Office Gay Mitchell. The three also visited Orient House yesterday, meeting with Faissal Hussein.

Palestinian refugee talks in Egypt make progress

News agencies

EGYPT, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority ended another round of talks in Cairo yesterday on repatriating Palestinian refugees, with delegation leaders saying they had made headway on the thorny issue.

But two days of talks failed to agree on the definition of a refugee, an argument that so far has stalled the negotiations.

Badr Hammam, Egyptian assistant foreign minister for Arab affairs and head of his delegation, said the committee meeting had achieved "noticeable progress."

"What the committee achieved has brought it closer to its principal goal, which is the return of refugees to their land and homes," Hammam told reporters.

Israeli envoy Yossi Hadass said the talks had been friendly and honest. "All delegations wanted to reach a solution and did not want to place obstacles in the way of peace," he said. "The committee has found practical ways to reach a solution that is satisfactory to all parties."

Palestinian envoy Zohdi Saeedi Amr said he hopes the four parties reach an agreement on the refugee issue before the start in May of talks on the final status of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem.

Amr had told reporters late Tuesday night that the committee meeting had been positive. "The deadlock which dominated the six previous meetings has been

broken," he added. Israel and its Arab neighbors had been at odds over the number of refugees, the timetable for their return, and defining who is a refugee. He said they had agreed on the thorniest issue - the criteria for deciding the number and type of Palestinians displaced from Gaza and the West Bank in the 1967 war.

"The Cairo meetings are a serious turning point. As long as we managed to sort out the number problem, defining who is a refugee is a fait accompli," Amr added.

Arab parties demand the unconditional return of all those made refugees since 1967 without exception, including those expelled by Israel on political or security grounds. Arab parties put the number of displaced Palestinians, including their offspring, at 2.5 million - a figure disputed by Israel, which says the number does not exceed 200,000. The delegations agreed yesterday to draw up lists of refugees.

International groups like the UN Relief and Works Agency and the Red Cross will draw up lists, too.

"We'll start to compare notes and make one list," said Hadass. "The moment we make one list it will be easy for us to achieve an understanding of the definition [of refugees]."

Amr said the next meeting would be held in Bethlehem from March 21 to March 23.

PA Police deny arresting 2 would-be suicide bombers

JON IMMANUEL

BETHLEHEM'S police chief yesterday denied reports his men had arrested two Islamic Jihad gunmen in Beit Jalla, who were wearing belts of explosives and preparing to cross into Israel.

"This was an Israeli rumor designed to create a pretext for closing the West Bank," said Col. Ahmed Eid, commenting on an Israel Radio report Tuesday night.

About 60,000 people are unable to cross into Israel to work since the closure went into effect yesterday. Security officials said it was imposed out of fear Islamic extremists would try to attack Israelis at the end of the 40-day mourning period for Yihya Ayyash, the bomb-maker dubbed "The Engineer." Palestinians expressed worries that the closure will be prolonged, eroding a vital source of income. Yesterday, Palestinian Authority Economics Minister

Ahmed Oreia and Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir agreed to establish three industrial parks in Jenin, Tulkarm, and the northern Gaza Strip. Work on the parks is due to begin in six months.

The parks, in which Israeli companies will participate, are designed to provide a way of employing Palestinians without bringing thousands across the Green Line.

In Jerusalem, government coordinator Maj.-Gen. Oren Shahor and Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij met to discuss the controversial new security wall around Rachel's Tomb, on which work has been stopped for the past three days. Discussions are to continue next Tuesday, but Shahor assured Freij that the wall will not block half the main road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem when it is completed, the spokesman for his office said.

IDF ombudsman: Soldiers' motivation is declining

ON LEVY

"THERE is a decline in the motivation of IDF soldiers today over that of previous years," IDF ombudsman Brig.-Gen. (res.) Aharon Doron said yesterday.

"Without a doubt, there has also been a change in Israeli society's perception of the army and of military service - and this has no connection with motivation. I think that there has been a decline in the status accorded to the army by the people."

Doron made these comments in presenting the ombudsman's annual report to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

He noted that his office had received 8,874 written complaints last year, as opposed to 8,600 in 1994 and 8,938 in 1993. "The number of complaints received this year returns the multi-year graph to the upward path it had been following since 1987," he said.

He also noted that more than 8,000 telephone complaints were received.

Doron said that half of all complaints were found unjustified. The most marked increase in complaints, 20 percent - from 2,676 in 1994 to 3,009 - came from reservists, he noted.

One troubling fact Doron reported was a 50% increase in the number of soldiers seeking psychological help. "This number," he said, "seems exaggerated to me. I can't explain it - I'm not a mental health officer - but it troubles me. The number of soldiers that are really mentally disturbed cannot be this great."

He also criticized the inter-

ence of parents in every aspect of their children's military service. "This is unhealthy," he said, adding that "it stems from the character of our army. Soldiers give mommy their officer's address."

"Leave the officers alone," he requested of parents. "If you have a complaint, come to me."

He reported a marked increase in the number of complaints received from parents. "In 1994, a fifth of all complaints regarding soldiers on compulsory service came from a parent. Last year, it was a fourth. There are dozens of cases in which we received a complaint from a parent, and when we started to investigate, the soldier son asked us not to bother, so we halted the investigation."

Doron said the vast majority of complaints, 71%, fell into six categories: medical problems, 18%; officer-enlisted man relations, 13%; placement, 11%; reserve duty, 14%; pay, 9%; and service provided the individual, 6%.

"As in previous years," he said, "the main focus of complaints from soldiers in compulsory service was about day-to-day matters, as expressed in officer-enlisted relations. These complaints include unbecoming language from officers, excessive toughness, and insensitivity to the problems of individual soldiers."

"It must be said that in many cases, the soldiers contribute to the problematic relationship by lack of motivation for army service in general, and for service in their unit or in their particular job."

Government outlines efforts to reduce Ofakim unemployment

EVERLYN GORDON

THE number of unemployed persons in Ofakim has dropped from 1,300 to 950 as a result of the government's efforts, Zvi Alderotti, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, told the Knesset Finance Committee yesterday.

In a letter to the committee, Alderotti detailed some of the steps that already have been or will be taken. For instance, the Finance and Interior Ministries have agreed to give the municipality an extra NIS 3 million, and the Interior, Industry and Defense Ministries have agreed to jointly finance the construction of a new outdoor market in the city, at the cost of NIS 1.5 million.

The Industry Ministry has agreed to allocate an additional NIS 1.5 million to renovating old industries in the city, the letter continued, and Mifal Hapayis has agreed to set up a branch there.

The Prime Minister's Office has also appointed Roni Douak to put together a group of invest-

tors which will build a \$150,000 community center in the city and raise money to build a sports center, Alderotti added.

On the employment front, the Industry Ministry has recently approved the establishment of three new factories in Ofakim, which will produce an additional 100 jobs, Alderotti said. The three are Apollo, an aluminum factory; Reuchman, a marble-working plant; and Tzel, which makes window blinds.

In addition, the letter said, Bezek, at the government's request, is considering moving its information center (144) there, which would create another 120 jobs.

Finally, the letter noted, there are another 33 companies who have either submitted requests for approval to build factories in Ofakim, or with whom the Industry Ministry is negotiating on the subject. If all of these factories were actually built - which, in the ministry's opinion, is unlikely - they would add another 1,500 or more jobs to the city.

Three preventive security agents arrested in Jerusalem

BILL HUTMAN

THREE Palestinian Preventive Security agents have been arrested for kidnapping Jerusalem Palestinians suspected of collaboration or drug dealing and taking them to preventive security headquarters in Ramallah, it was revealed yesterday.

Jerusalem District Court yesterday lifted a ban on publication of details of the arrests and investigation.

The Oslo accords forbid PA security agents from operating in Jerusalem, but have not prevented them from continuing to try set up their own police force in the Arab parts of the city.

A police spokesman said more arrests of Palestinian agents illegally operating in Jerusalem are expected.

Ziyad Wahadan, 19, of Kalanda; Riyad Sheikh, 20, of Anata; and Anan Muwakat, 27, of Bir Nabala, are being held at the Russian Compound. Police said they and their cohorts who remain at large severely beat their victims, who were also mistreated during interrogation in Ramallah.

The spokesman said the exact number of people kidnapped remains unclear because many of the victims apparently fear to file complaints.

Bill would aid polio victims

LIAT COLLINS

POLIO victims visited the Knesset yesterday to discuss their special needs and witness the preliminary reading of a bill granting them equal rights to other disabled people.

Most of those present were victims of the polio outbreak of the 1950s and said that their parents had either died or had grown too old to continue looking after them.

The bill was initiated by MK David Mena, and jointly submitted by several MKs from coalition and opposition parties.

The bill would grant the polio

victims a one-time grant and aid in buying equipment for home use, as well as help in housing costs. It also contains a clause calling for fitting elevators suitable for the disabled in public buildings.

The visitors, about 70 of the country's 10,000 polio victims, told MKs they wanted equal rights in law, as opposed to the unregulated benefits they now receive. Some polio sufferers are apparently housed in old-age homes, despite being much younger than other residents, for lack of alternate housing.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ISRAELI JOURNALISTS

The management of the National Federation of Israeli Journalists appeals to its members in the written and electronic media and to all those who support freedom of the press to join the journalists of Davar Rishon in a demonstration, which will be held today, Thursday, February 15, 1996, at 2:30 p.m., against the Histadrut management's decision on the immediate closure of the newspaper.

The demonstration will take place in front of the Davar Building, 45 Rehov Shenkin, Tel Aviv.

05-72991

Serbs probe 3 Moslems as war criminals

News agencies
SARAJEVO

BOSNIAN Serbs who cut contact with the NATO-led peace force to protest the extradition of two officers to a war crimes tribunal have reportedly detained three Moslems on similar charges.

The Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA yesterday said the Moslems were detained in Foca, south of Sarajevo, and were being investigated by military authorities on suspicion of killing Serb civilians during Bosnia's war. No details were immediately available.

In The Hague, the UN war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia said yesterday it expected to issue its first indictments against Bosnian Moslems in the coming weeks.

News of the forthcoming indictments was contained in a press statement by chief prosecutor Richard Goldstone.

"As stated previously, the investigation into alleged war crimes committed by Bosnian Moslem forces is reaching finality, and the prosecutor anticipates that indictments arising from this investigation will be submitted to a judge for confirmation in the coming weeks," the statement said.

Yesterday in Brussels, NATO reiterated its determination to bring indicted war criminals in Bosnia to justice, after being stung by criticism that it is trying to duck responsibility for

arresting them.

NATO officials said the alliance's 16 ambassadors had clarified its position and ordered its senior military to make sure its 60,000 troops in the field were fully aware of the Implementation Force's duty in this area.

"The position is quite clear. IFOR troops must apprehend known war criminals where possible," one senior official said, adding that the peacekeepers would stop short of hunting down indicted war criminals.

Putting another dent into already battered peace efforts, gunmen shot yesterday at a bus connecting Serb and government-held sectors of Sarajevo, wounding the conductor and a passenger.

The shooting took place just hours after the service resumed for the first time since the war began. NATO officials said it occurred in Sarajevo's Stup section, a former frontline community, but it was unclear whether the shot came from the Serb or the government-held side.

The bus driver told Associated Press Television that he drove straight to the hospital when he saw the two were injured. The bus

was hit by four bullets as it was traveling from government-held Sarajevo toward Iidza.

In Rome, the European Union yesterday strongly reaffirmed its support of efforts by EU administrator Hans Koschnick to reunite the divided Bosnian town of Mostar and said a recent attack on him was "inadmissible".

"The European Union is firmly committed to achieving the objectives of the EU administrator in Mostar," it said in a statement. "The union reaffirms its confidence in (Koschnick) and fully supports his efforts to overcome present obstacles."

Mostar's Bosnian Croat leaders last week broke off ties with EU mediators over a plan by Koschnick to draw up municipal boundaries in the southern Bosnian town.

Angry demonstrators trapped Koschnick in his car for an hour last week and briefly occupied the EU base in the town in a protest condemned by NATO and the European states.

"The union strongly condemns the recent inadmissible attacks against the EU administrator and his staff, whose safety and role must be fully guaranteed by all parties concerned," it said in a statement released by the Italian Foreign Ministry.

Italy currently holds the rotating EU presidency.

South Korea shelves war games with US as tensions rise over North Korean defections

News agencies
SEOUL

SOUTH Korea announced yesterday it was shelving major war games with the United States this year as tension rose on the peninsula over a wave of defections of prominent North Koreans.

A wife of shadowy North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has vanished from a Swiss villa, South Korea's spy agency said yesterday. A newspaper reported she apparently was trying to seek political asylum in Seoul.

Sung Hae Rim, 59, is a wife of Kim, who has been leading the reclusive North since the July 1994 death of his father, longtime ruler Kim Il Sung.

The mass-circulation *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper carried a front-page report that Sung and her elder sister, Sung Hae Ryang, 61,

and the sister's daughter disappeared from Switzerland earlier this month and went to a third country.

South Korea's Agency for National Security Planning confirmed the disappearances, along with the previously undisclosed defection to Seoul of Sung Hae Ryang's son, Lee Han Young.

In the latest defection incident, a North Korean man armed with a pistol broke into Russia's trade mission in Pyongyang yesterday to seek political asylum, Itar-Tass news agency said. Several North Korean guards were killed in an exchange of fire, the agency said.

Suh Dae-won, spokesman at the Seoul foreign ministry, said the cancellation of the annual war games, codenamed Team Spirit, was to coax troubled North Korea into taking steps for détente.

"The decision was taken to create a positive atmosphere in the Korean peninsula and promote confidence needed to continue implementing the Geneva agreement," he said, referring to a landmark US-North Korean nuclear deal.

The agreement, signed in Geneva in October 1994, broke new ground in ties between the

West and the Stalinist state.

Washington and Seoul have said they do not want a sudden collapse of the communist North and want to convince Pyongyang to gradually open up to the world.

South Korean officials said about 200 people have defected to South Korea in the past two years.

Itar-Tass, reporting from Pyongyang on yesterday's defection incident, said several North Korean guards were killed in a shootout that erupted as the gunman burst into the trade mission located in the premises of the Russian embassy.

It said the man had threatened to commit suicide if his demands for asylum were not met.



Local residents of Delta, British Columbia gather outside a barn near the Delta Air Park where the pilot of a small trainer plane ditched his aircraft just short of the runway. The pilot walked away with only minor scratches. (AP)

Sri Lanka attacks Tamil rebel ship

COLOMBO (AP) — A Tamil rebel ship suspected to be carrying a major arms shipment exploded and burned furiously at sea after it was attacked by naval boats and air force planes yesterday, the government said.

An unknown number of rebels on board died or were injured in the attack, about 20 km off the northeastern coast of Mullaitivu, where the Tamil Tiger guerrillas are known to have a large base.

The navy and air force "took action to destroy this ship after giving due warning," said a Defense Ministry statement.

On the other side of the island, an explosion was reported from mid-sea off the western coast of Negombo near Colombo yesterday. Helicopters and naval gunboats were investigating. There was no indication yet where the blast occurred, said a military official.

The destruction of the rebel arms boat is the military's first major

success in detecting and possibly destroying arms being smuggled by the guerrillas by sea routes to fuel their 12-year-old separatist war.

The Tigers are fighting the predominantly Sinhalese government for an independent Tamil homeland in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. More than 40,000 people have been killed in the war that has sharpened ethnic divisions in this nation of 18 million people.

On Tuesday, President Chandrika Kumaratunga ordered an investigation into the killing of 24 Tamil civilians, allegedly by Sri Lankan soldiers, in eastern Sri Lanka on Sunday. The military denies the allegations.

Also yesterday, the government ordered all schools in Sri Lanka to be closed indefinitely. No reason was given, but an education ministry statement said it is handling the matter with the defense ministry.

Hometown flags are out for Yeltsin

YEKATERINBURG (Reuters) — The Ural city of Yekaterinburg is readying itself as the stage from which its greatest son, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, will launch his re-election campaign.

Pencils and doors have been given a fresh lick of paint. Actors, singers and other celebrities have been brought in to give the campaign a jubilant send-off.

The 65-year-old Kremlin leader, was due to fly in last night to the city of nearly 1.5 million people known as Sverdlovsk in the communist era.

Preparations for his visit, which will combine Soviet-style pomp and American talk-to-the-people electioneering, left little doubt Yeltsin would use his home town today as a backdrop to announce his bid for a second term in power.

Yeltsin will visit his father's grave, a children's hospital and a chocolate factory and take a ride on a local underground train, aides said.

Soviet Sverdlov, a symbol of industrial growth, a center for military production, was the power base from which Yeltsin confronted Mikhail Gorbachev in the last years of the Soviet era.

But it is not just nostalgia that prompts Yeltsin to choose his home town as a springboard for his hopes of repeating his 1991 election victory.

His political and economic reforms face a strong challenge from the resurgent Communist Party, which now controls more than a third of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament.

Local opinion pollsters say that 17 percent of voters support Yeltsin, compared to six percent nationwide.

Dig goes on for 20 trapped in tunnel

TOKYO (Reuters) — Rescue workers yesterday demolished a giant boulder which crushed a road tunnel in northern Japan and started trying to reach the 20 people trapped inside since Saturday.

A controlled explosion, the fourth in as many days, finally demolished most of the 50,000-tonne slab which crushed the Toyohama Tunnel, about 50 km northwest of Sapporo, capital of Hokkaido.

Rescue officials said workers were using power shovels to remove pieces of the slab that landed on top of the tunnel. Digging inside could not start

until experts made sure they would not cause further landslides.

"We want to rescue the people trapped in the tunnel as soon as possible," an official of the Hokkaido Development Agency said.

"Although we will continue our work to remove pieces of the slab throughout the night, it now looks impossible to start actual rescue work before early tomorrow morning," he said.

Television networks carried live pictures of the explosion, with huge boulders of black rock cascading down the steep cliff onto the seashore below.



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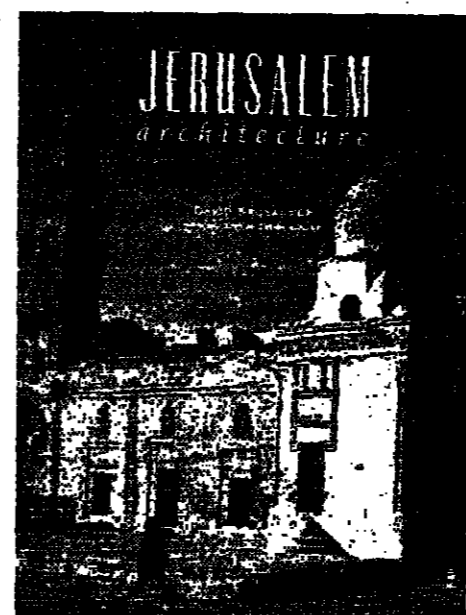
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GREER FAY CASHMAN

Jerusalem socialite Sara Davidovitch has unlimited access to most people in high places. A columnist with the local publication 'Kol Ha'ir,' Davidovitch is a journalistic phenomenon in that she has never written a bad word about anyone.

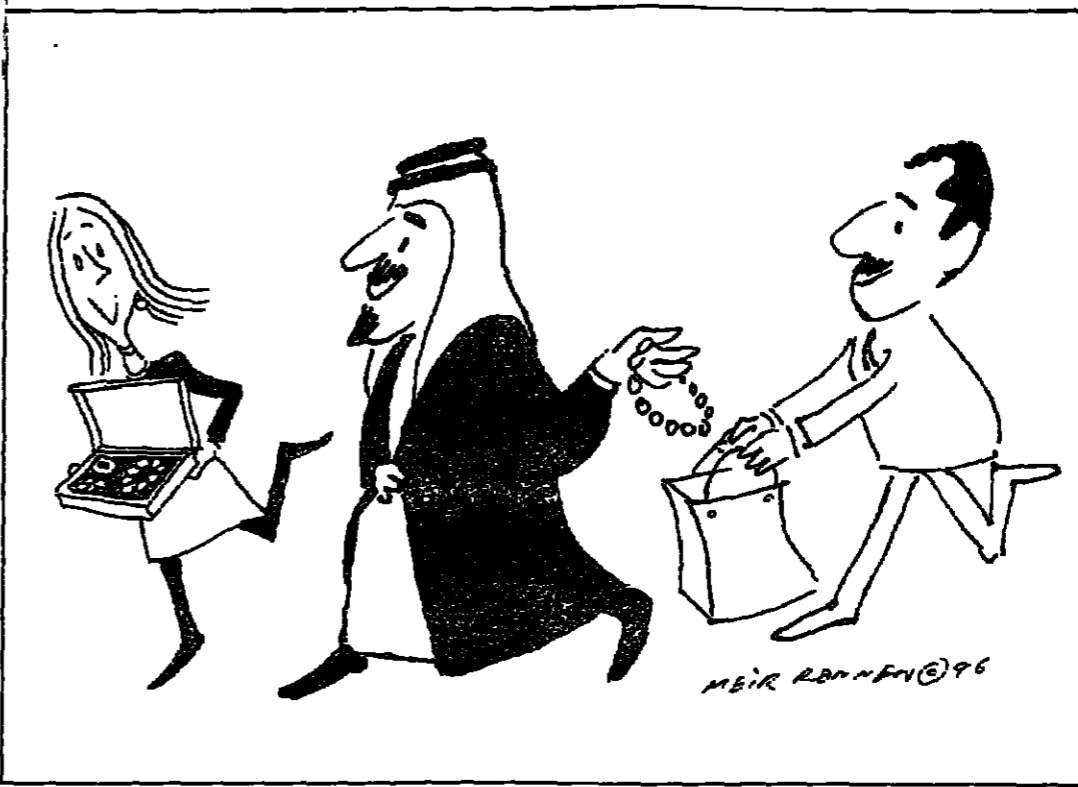
Davidovitch also stands out in the crowd by virtue of her flaming red hair. Her natural color is a rather ordinary shade of brown. After trying various brown dyes and having a flirtation with blonde, she settled for the red.

Hairdresser Amir Segev gets the credit for this redhead's style.

hair sculptor rather than a hair stylist. His cut is totally asymmetrical, allowing for infinite scope in styling because the uneven lengths invite experimentation.

had not been announced. "We had no idea he was coming," a mall spokeswoman said. "We only found out about it afterwards."

acing the steps of a
ert Saudi mission



only handmade Israeli pieces. He walked around the store and made his selections. "This, this, and this," Ziva casually waved her finger at several glass cases, imitating the sheik.

some of the Israeli elite. Limiti, a ladies' fashion store, was also on the Jordanian recommended list.

At the towel store, he could have bought matching monogrammed purple his, hers, hers, hers, and hers robes for only NIS 169 each.

The do's and don't's of tipping

Last summer, S.K. bought a Tadiran refrigerator - delivery included - from Sensor in Ra'anana. When the appliance arrived, S.K. thanked the two delivery men for their pains.

CAVEAT EMPTOR! RUTHIE BLUM

strictly enforces its policy regarding the behavior of its delivery personnel.

Have the telephone number of the shop of purchase or delivery firm handy. This way, if your merchandise does not arrive on schedule, you can inquire as to its whereabouts.

Ziva, owner of the upscale jewelry store by the same name, said that the sheik requested to see

Neo-Nazi turns over a new leaf

It could be a movie: German Aryan poster boy and former neo-Nazi meets American Jew. They co-authored a book about the former neo-Nazi's life and travel America, telling their strange story.

Hasselbach recalls in the book. Reiss was repelled by Hasselbach the neo-Nazi. But he gravitated to him after the German left the movement and a failed bomb attack on Hasselbach's mother drew headlines.

For example: "So, what do you think the impending reunification will mean to the way that we will remember the Nazi past?"

Reiss would omit in such-interviews that he was Jewish.

This particular form of gratitude was not what the workmen had in mind, however. With outstretched palms and raised voices, they aggressively demanded a tip. Home alone at the time - and with a poor command of Hebrew - S.K. was intimidated. She hurriedly handed over a NIS 50 bill, anxious for the daunting duo's departure.

When purchasing an item requiring delivery, always ask whether the fee for delivery is included in the price. If it is, make sure this is written on the receipt.

In the event that your delivery is carried out smoothly - and graciously - you should keep in mind that tipping for this service is customary.

But even stranger, it is true. Ingo Hasselbach, 28, a tall, blond, ex neo-Nazi, is currently on a US book tour with Tom Reiss, a 31-year-old journalist who is short, dark and Jewish.

Reiss and Hasselbach met just over two years ago, at Reiss's request. That led to the lengthy and painful process which produced the English-language book 'Fuehrer-Ex' published by Random House this month.

Hasselbach had already written a shorter book in German titled 'The Reckoning: A Neo-Nazi Gets Out,' in the form of letters to his father. But the English-language book written with Reiss is longer and more probing.

The turning point in writing the book came when Reiss, after lengthy discussions, revealed his Jewish ancestry to Hasselbach. Once Reiss opened up, Hasselbach did, too.

At the end of January, S.K. asked for my assistance. Tadiran chief of customer complaints Noam Biran reiterated that the absence of a bill of lading or purchase number makes locating S.K.'s fridge-bearers difficult.

If you pay at the time of purchase, make sure to get a receipt. If it is to be paid at the time of delivery, have a written figure to preclude possible differences of opinion during delivery.

Ironically, she ended up rewarding ugly behavior quite handsomely.

Reiss was making his own discoveries after the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989.

Reiss was making his own discoveries after the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989.

Reiss was making his own discoveries after the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989.

Reiss was making his own discoveries after the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989.

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The Year Of The Rat Begins February 19

Celebrating Chinese New Year in Hong Kong

by Susan Farlow

After the lion dancers stormed through my hotel lobby, banging drums and cymbals loud enough to wake the dead, there was no way evil spirits could be hanging around my hotel lobby.

I had just arrived in Hong Kong, on the eve of Chinese Lunar New Year, during the territory's most important celebration. This three-day public holiday is full of ancient Chinese rituals and strange customs. "You have a chance to see the real Hong Kong during this holiday," said a friend, a Hong Kong native, who went on to explain that the tradition of driving away evil spirits with noise goes back to the earliest days of Chinese history.

The legend relates that one winter night in prehistoric times, a monster attacked Chinese villagers and their homes. Sages of the day figured out that the

monster appeared after the sun had risen 365 times. And soon the wise men discovered the monster was afraid of three things: bright light, the color red and loud noise. As a result, on the 365th evening of the lunar year, the ancient Chinese lit up their homes brilliantly, painted the town red, and banged drums as they performed lion dances. The monster never returned.

This ritual of bright lights—lots of red—and much noise continues to this day as a means to repel evil and bring on good luck.

I quickly realized I had a lot to learn about celebrating New Year's, Chinese-style.

"Don't miss the flower markets tonight," said Stephen Wong of the Hong Kong Tourist Association. "I am going to buy shoes tonight."

Shoes? On New Year's Eve? As Mr. Wong explained, the word "shoe" in Cantonese sounds like the word "sigh," which has negative connotations. Because no one wants to start the New Year in any unlucky or "negative" way, Hong Kongers do not buy shoes during the New Year period. They do buy all the shoes they want up through midnight on New Year's Eve. Chinese New Year, as I was learning, was bursting with symbolism and superstition.

Later that evening, my husband and I set off by tram for the huge flower fair at Victoria Park. We enjoyed a front-row, center-seat view of New Year's Eve events through the tram's double-decker win-

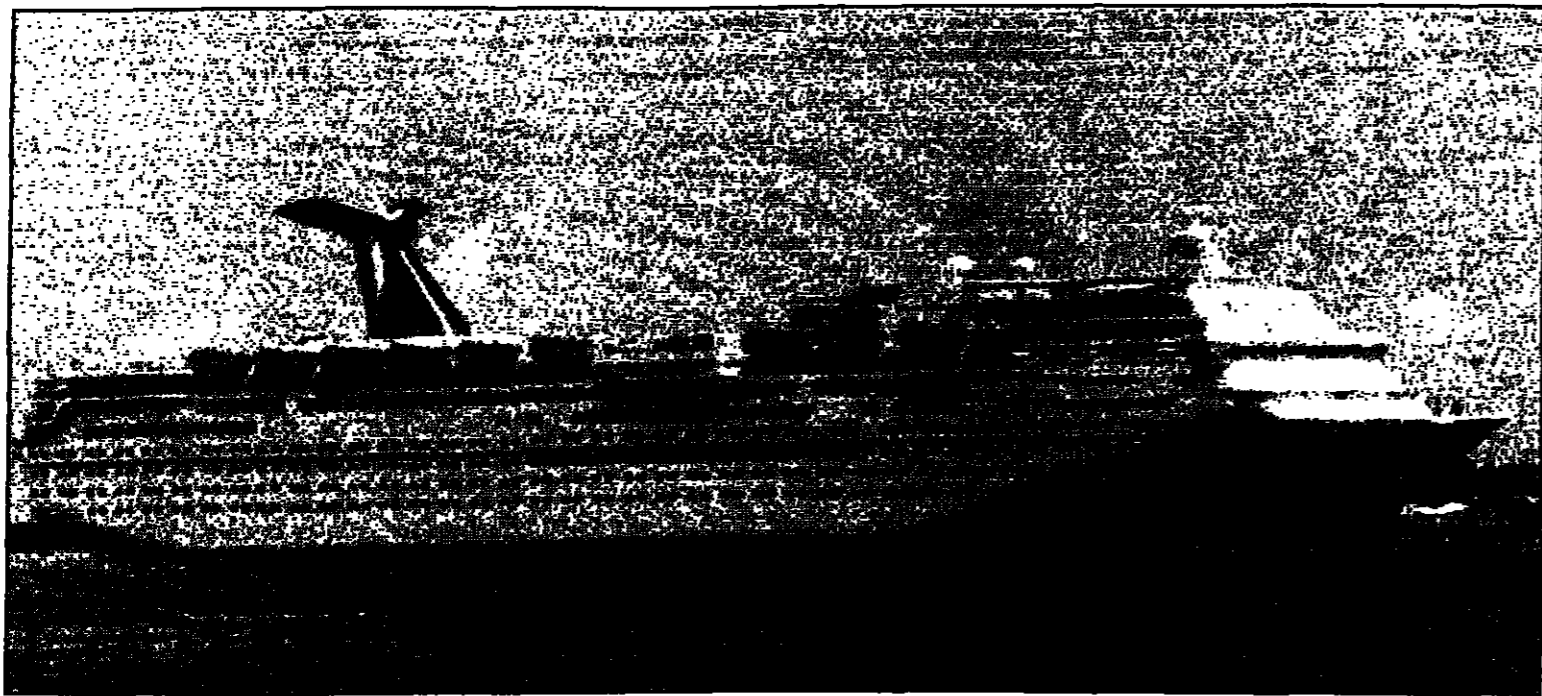
Continued on page 4



The Chinese New Year Celebration is one filled with superstition, symbolism and ritual.



Fireworks—A Chinese New Year's Tradition—thunder over the dazzling port of Victoria Harbour.



There are plenty of ships to choose from when taking a cruise.

WHEN YOU

By Philip Sousa

Copley News Service

"Just look at us!" said Debby Record. "We're all having such a grand time."

"Us" included 17-year-old Lyann (one of her three daughters) and a score of their friends from home, Joplin, Missouri. We were aboard the spiffy 65-foot catamaran Yucatan Fury on the return leg of a terrific half-day snorkeling, sailing and beach party out of Mexico's delightful Cozumel.

After wandering about incredibly clear waters packed with fish, we'd tried sea kayaking and wind surfing, played volleyball, swam and sunbathed while on an otherwise deserted and spotless beach. On the way back to port, as complimentary cool beers and zesty margaritas were served, a spirited crew member danced to "Magdalena" and other catchy pop hits from the roof of the boat's small bar. On the open deck below, his nearly 100 guests followed him, or tried to.

We were traveling around the Western Caribbean on the newest "Fun Ship" of Carnival Cruise Lines, the 2,040-passenger Imagination. Two months and a day after she entered service, we were sailing from Miami on a round-trip week-long itinerary that includ-

A Scenic Passage: The Panama Canal

By Brenda Warner Rotzoll

Chicago Sun-Times

BALBOA, Panama—A gentle breeze wafts by, the full moon casts a highway of light across the bay and a veritable Main Street of twinkling electric lights stretches for miles into the Pacific.

The man-made lights are those of ships by the dozen lined up waiting their turn for passage through the greatest construction project the world has ever known, the Panama Canal.

Technology, what a lure thou art, and not just to freighters, tankers and warships a year seeking to cut 8,000 miles off the voyage from North Pacific to North Atlantic. The trade group Cruise Lines International Association estimates 288,000 residents of the United States and Canada took a cruise through the Panama Canal last year. That's more than double the number who cruised through the canal 10 years ago. (CLIA keeps U.S.-Canada figures because those nations provide nine-tenths of the people who take cruises anywhere in the world.)

"I always wanted to see the Panama Canal, so I said 'Why not,'" retired schoolteacher Erling Lund of Seattle said, explaining why he booked passage on the first cruise of his life.

Lund was one of more than a thousand fellow passengers when I took the first cruise of my life in December, a 10-day trip aboard Royal Cruise Line's Royal Odyssey from Acapulco, Mexico, down the west coast of Central America and through the canal to the Netherlands Antilles in the south central Caribbean.

Royal Cruise Line has now merged into Norwegian Cruise Line. NCL will make several passages of the Panama Canal in 1996.

Any Caribbean cruise offers sun, fun and warm weather. A cruise that includes passage through the

invite President Theodore Roosevelt in to build his "big ditch."

I prepared for my canal voyage by rereading one of my favorite books, David McCullough's epic history *The Path Between the Seas* (Touchstone Books/Simon & Schuster trade, \$14.95). It contains the greatest existing compilation of facts, figures and social history concerning the canal. Most of my shipmates obtained their information the easy way, by listening to the canal history provided by the official commentator who boards each cruise ship moving through Panama. Every few minutes a bit of history, or information on some landmark we were passing, would be broadcast on the ship's loudspeaker system.

Pilots in the employ of the Panama Canal Commission guide every ship that passes through. One, two or three pilots are used, depending on size. The Royal Odyssey rated two pilots, both of them Americans. Captains Bob Spencer and Barry Patten. Spencer came out of retirement because there is such a shortage of canal pilots.

We were several miles offshore come morning when they boarded to guide us through the long, dredged channel leading to Balboa, the port at the Pacific end of the canal. The sun had just risen in the east, over the Pacific, which felt as odd as it sounds.

Most people think of the canal running from east to west, from Atlantic to Pacific. It doesn't. Panama is shaped like a shallow S curve lying on its side. The Atlantic-Pacific axis actually runs from northwest to southeast, and the Pacific port of Balboa is more than 20 miles east of the Atlantic ports of Cristobal and Colon.

Balboa and next-door Panama City gleamed marble white in the morning sun as we approached the rainbow-arched Bridge of the Americas carrying the Pan-American Highway over the Rio Grande. We entered the river and a few miles inland, ascended 54 feet in the two-chamber Miraflores locks, passed through little Miraflores Lake, and went up another 31 feet in the Pedro Miguel lock.

Most of the passage across Panama is at 85 feet above sea level, including the 9-mile-long Culebra Cut through the mountains. Constant landslides here added more than 25 million cubic yards of earth and rock to the material which had to be excavated for the canal. That was nearly one-tenth the total of 262 million cubic yards.

The slides never stop. The remains of one in 1994 still are being cleared away from the sides of the canal. The reason for this slippage is that the isthmus rose and sank in the sea three times over the course of 60 million years. Alternating layers of earth and seabed create zones of instability, narrator Ed Paulk explained.

Beyond the cut is Gatun Lake, and at its northern or Atlantic end are the three stepped chambers of the Gatun locks. Pass them, and you soon are in the open waters of the Caribbean.

The canal follows the line of the old Panama Railroad, built because of the California gold rush. The railroad was used to haul supplies for building the canal.

A canal at this height is possible because about 300 inches of rain a year falls in Panama and much of it is channeled into storage lakes feeding the locks. Some 26 million gallons of fresh water is released into the locks for each upward or downward passage. It flows downward by gravity. Lock gates are electrically controlled, with the electricity generated at spillways in the storage dams.

That electricity also powers the "mules" or electric railroad engines which pull each ship into the locks. Ships do not move into the locks under their own power because they could malfunction and damage the locks.

The tense moments of each passage come as a vessel moves into the various lock chambers. Pilots with hand radio sets issue orders to the mules. They also give commands to the ship's officers, who relay them



Why not take the time to learn scuba while on board?

Photo courtesy of Princess Cruises

A cruise that includes passage through the Panama Canal adds the attractions of historic endeavor and otherworldly beauty.

Panama Canal adds the attractions of historic endeavor and otherworldly beauty.

That beauty is green, calm and remote. Steep hills covered with jungle vegetation line the northern and southern ends of the route, with two man-made lakes at the center. Near the locks which raise and lower ships 85 feet from sea level, trees have been cut back and there are grassy banks several hundred feet wide before the jungle takes over again.

Winding through the Culebra Cut, down the Chagres River or through the islands that dot the lakes (islands that are the peaks of drowned hills) there often is no other ship in sight. All is silent but for the throb of the ship's engines, the call of a bird, the rustle of the breeze.

Panama is the low spot on the mountain chain that runs down the western spine of North, Central and South America. Here the French tried for the last two decades of the 19th century to hack out a canal 50 miles long linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal, insisted for most of that time it must be a canal at sea level, with much of the route following the Chagres River.

That proved impossible because of the storm-driven rises and falls on the Chagres, where the water level could rise 15 feet in a day. Another problem was the tides on the Pacific side, which zip up and down as much as 21 feet a day.

The United States finally bought out the French and set out to build a canal with locks in 1904, after first creating a climate which encouraged Panama to revolt against Colombia, declare independence and

to workers handling cables that reach from ship to lock wall or to mule.

Moving into the topmost of the Gatun lock chambers, we touched the side of the lock on the starboard side. "Hey, wake up. Slack that line," the pilot yelled.

Tens of thousands of ships a year pass through the canal. The gates and lock chambers never have sustained serious damage.

Our daylong trip through the canal marked the one time passengers were reluctant to go to lunch. It was too interesting up on deck. But most of us did grab a quick bite in the dining room because this was the day for the Caribbean buffet, a riot of ice sculptures, fruit and vegetable sculptures and flowers surrounding dozens of meal choices.

Cruises are notorious for the profusion of food they offer. The Royal Odyssey's daily listing of available edibles included early coffee and cinnamon rolls poolside; three locations serving breakfast; a sit-down luncheon plus lunch buffet, soup and sandwiches, or grilled specialties at the bar; afternoon tea with cakes and cookies in the lounge, with dancing, or frozen yogurt and cookies; poolside; an elegant sit-down dinner; a late-evening buffet for the still-hungry, and 24-hour tea and coffee service for insomniacs. Plus room service any old time.

It helps to be a speed reader if you're going on a Caribbean cruise—it's exhausting just reading the menu. Let alone the daily ship's bulletins on all the fun that's there for passengers to enjoy.

Here's a less than comprehensive list of what was going on in addition to lounging on deck chairs and walking five laps per mile around the deck on my cruise.

Nightly live shows, movies in the theater, movies on television in your stateroom, swimming, exercise classes, captain's reception, special activities (which vary each cruise) including spa specialists, a graphologist (hand-writing analyst), a dance teacher, an imaging specialist (make yourself look good), a craft teacher and a bridge teacher, regular salon and spa activities, an on-board casino, duty-free shopping aboard, plus shore excursions to Costa Rica, the San Blas Islands, Curaçao and Aruba.

No wonder my favorite daily activity was a nice nap.

WANT

Who's



JPMorgan

WANT TO CRUISE...

ed Cozumel, a brief stop at nearby Playa del Carmen for an excursion to Tulum's remarkable Mayan ruins, as well as stops in Grand Cayman and Jamaica.

On that fully booked voyage in early September, the age gamut spanned from pre-teens to newlyweds to couples celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries. I guessed that more than half those on our floating resort were baby boomers (roughly between ages 35 and 50), with and without kids. The passengers' backgrounds, professions and hometowns were quite diverse.

All the passengers I met echoed the verdict of the lively passenger from Joplin—they told me they were having a ball.

ASSORTED CRUISE FACTS

Carnival's admittedly glitzy "Fun Ship" scores high across the demographic map, except perhaps with the butter-and-caviar set. Other major lines I believe appeal to a broad range of vacationers include Celebrity, Princess and Royal Caribbean.

Each of the more than 100 ships that host vacationers has a distinct personality. Nationality of the crew, cuisine, physical layout and decor are among important elements that determine a vessel's feel or ambiance.

The common denominator is that, no matter which ship you choose, what you pay for your movable holiday includes accommodations, abundant and often excellent food, a host of leisure activities, entertainment and, as a rule, air fare to and from the vessel and airport/ship transfers. Bar drinks, shore excursions, tips and shopping are the only extras.

CHOOSING YOUR SHIP

Cost and length of the voyage are, of course, key factors. But there are others you should consider. Destination. Will it be your first time there or an

encore visit? If the latter, then ports of call and the line's experience in the region take on added import. Either way, "when" should be right up there with cost. Sailing before or after an area's high season usually means great savings and no crowds on ships or harbors.

Size. For lots of action and company, pick a mega-

Sailing before or after an area's high season usually means great savings and no crowds on ships or harbors.

liner, such as the 855-foot-long *Imagination*. Large ships, with room for about 1,000 passengers, usually have a more relaxed pace, and some, such as *Crystal's* *Harmony* and *Symphony*, are downright palatial.

Those in the medium category—400 to 700 guests—are often more spacious. Small vessels—from 100 to 300 passengers—can be casual and inexpensive, like the *Star Clippers* (yes, those two beauties with real sails) or luxurious and pricey, such as *Seabourn's* twin jewels.

Shipmates. A competent travel agent, a reliable cruise guidebook or trusted friends should help you learn what kind of vacation a ship attracts and thus you can decide if it's the one for you.

Amenities and features. Most of us look at a cruise as a change of pace from life at home, but some don't wish to give up their cholesterol-free diet, morning run, pre-dinner soak in the hot tub, the 6 p.m. news or other daily habits. Ensure that the ships under consideration can meet your particular requirements.

Hobbies and interests. Increasingly, lines offer "theme" sailings that—via lectures from experts, competitions and performances—spotlight the likes of backgammon, music, mystery novels, cooking, all sorts of sports and much more. Some of these, such as

the annual Floating Jazz Festival aboard Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norway*, are sold out months in advance.

Special factors. Besides the variables highlighted above, families, honeymooners, singles and the physically challenged should ascertain that the ships in which they are interested have the desired or needed facilities.

Sailing with youngsters. Several major lines have ships with playgrounds, video rooms, teen centers and other facilities—some supervised, others not—for young cruisers. And their fares (for the sea

voyage, but not necessarily for the flights involved) are often very reasonable, especially when sharing a cabin with their parents.

At present, two-ship Premier is the only line catering exclusively to families. It offers three- and four-night sailings to the Bahamas from Florida's Port Canaveral; these may be combined with similar-length packages at nearby theme parks such as *Sea World*, *Universal Studios* and *Walt Disney World*.

Honeymooners. Yes, the right ship, time and location usually translate into a series of romantic days laced with pampering and special moments. Most lines have packages designed with new Mr. and Mrs. *Happy Cruiser* in mind and similar options for those wishing to mark their umpteenth anniversary with a marriage vows renewal ceremony. Features vary from one line to the next, but they usually include queen-size or double bed, private cocktail party with the skipper, table for two in the dining room, breakfast in bed and souvenirs.

Singles. *Cruising solo* has its advantages. For one, it's usually easier to meet and socialize with other passengers or, if the solitary type, keep such encounters to a minimum. Singles, however, usually must pay 150 percent to twice the per-person fare, which is

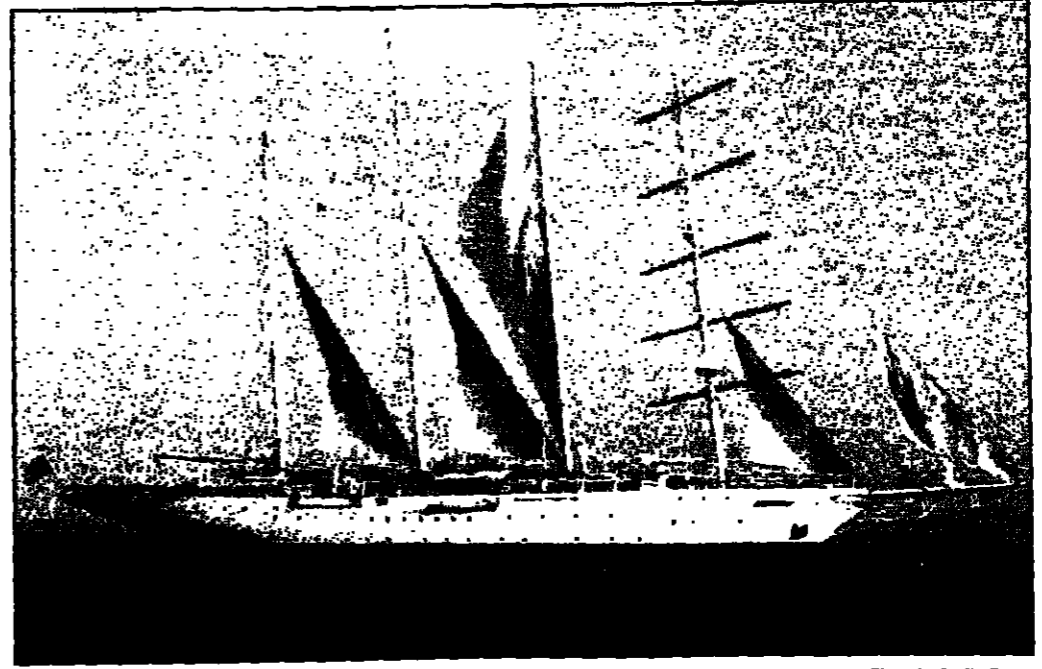


Photo by Philip Sousa

Today many tourists are opting trips on Clipper ships.

based on double occupancy. A few lines, such as *Cunard*, *Radisson Seven Seas* and *Seabourn*, have substantially lower surcharges. And at least one, *Star Clippers*, which late this year will add *Southeast Star* to its popular roster of European and Caribbean voyages under sail, will not charge singles extra on a space-available basis.

Physically challenged. Needing a cane, walker or wheelchair to get around need not keep you from enjoying the safe and comfortable environment found aboard many, but by no means all, liners. Medium to large vessels often have the best facilities, such as specially fitted bathrooms in cabins (clearly shown on brochures' deck plans) designated for disabled passengers, ramps by steps and sills, doors wide enough for a walker or wheelchair and, of course, elevators.

At the ports you wish to visit, will the ship dock or anchor offshore? If one's mobility is impaired, going ashore on a tender is at best very difficult, often impossible. (If depending on a battery-operated wheelchair, make sure the airline you are planning to use to get to your ship and back allows for it; some do not, others require that the battery be drained before it's placed aboard the aircraft.)

Short trips. Taking one of several three- and four-day sailings available, primarily in California and Florida, at often bargain rates is a way to test the

crusing waters. Locking up the best deal. The unprecedented number of new liners vying for your patronage (including *Celebrity's* spectacular new *Century* and *Princess's* dazzling *Sun*, currently the world's largest cruise liner) means simply this: From the largest discounts on record to two-for-the-price-of-one and other lures, there are more bargains than ever for the savvy shopper. And that's whether you book through a large-volume specialist like the *Cruise Line*, (001) 305/653-6111, or your own trusted agent.

Chronologically, from now on the best deals will be in the Caribbean, then Panama Canal sailings, Alaska and Europe, New England/Canada in the fall, followed by Southeast Asia (especially itineraries that include Vietnam and Hong Kong).

"Cruising. Answers to Your Questions," an informative booklet by the 27-member *Cruise Lines International Association* (CLIA), is available from CLIA, 500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1407, New York, New York 10110. Its site on the World Wide Web is <http://www.ten-io.com/clia/> where a prospective cruiser can get the address of an affiliate travel agency nearby.

Philip Sousa is a freelance writer.

Who's cruising?

By Philip Sousa

Cruise News Service

I've long been intrigued by demographics, hence my curiosity regarding a new study by the *Cruise Lines International Association*, whose 27 members cater to North American travelers. Nearly 3,000 cruise passengers contributed to this survey, and they fall into distinct categories.

Baby boomers are the wave of the future. This decade's survey that mostly the elderly opt for vacations abroad. James G. Godeman, CLIA president, notes that the boomers, about 35 and 55 years old, represent a whopping 52 percent of current cruise passengers, while only 15 percent are over 65.

The study also says two types of boomers: The "vitalistic" variety have intense, strenuous lives and seek escape and relaxation in the form of vacations in general and cruises in particular. The others are the "rustless" group, who aspire to cruising, have enjoyed their first cruise and want to do it again.

Committed cruisers. 15 percent of those surveyed, typically women of various ages, look for the best value—but not necessarily the cheapest price—when choosing a cruise or other type of vacation.

Luxury seekers. Fourteen percent of those in the CLIA study can afford and opt for the best in

accommodations, cuisine and service. A person of observation: Posh suites with balconies, butlers and other required amenities can be found on the so-called mainstream ships of several major popular lines, such as *Cunard*, *Celebrity*, *Holland America*, *Princess*, *Royal Caribbean* and *Royal Cruise*. But others, the likes of *Crystal's* *Harmony* and *Symphony*, *Cunard's* two *Sea Goddesses*, *Radisson Seven Seas' Radisson Diamond* and *Song of Flower*, *Royal Cruise's* *Queen Odyssey*, and *Seabourn's* *Pride and Spirit*, offer in size but all offer nothing but luxury.

Expatriates. Eleven percent of those surveyed are, according to CLIA, highly educated, seasoned travelers who enjoy being active while on vacation, are keen on exploration and adventure and seek out different and unusual destinations.

While the Caribbean remains the Number One cruise choice in the world, Godeman noted, off-the-beaten-track areas in Africa, Antarctica, Southeast Asia, South America and the South Pacific are being explored by a larger number of cruises than ever before.

Ship buffs. At six percent, this is the survey's smallest age-wise the most senior segment. But they are the vast majority of the 52 percent that CLIA has found to be repeat or frequent cruise passengers.

Ship buffs are attracted to the comfortable, hassle-free nature of cruising and fine dining aboard today's ships, said Godeman. "Cost is typically not as much a factor as choice of cruise line and cruise ship."

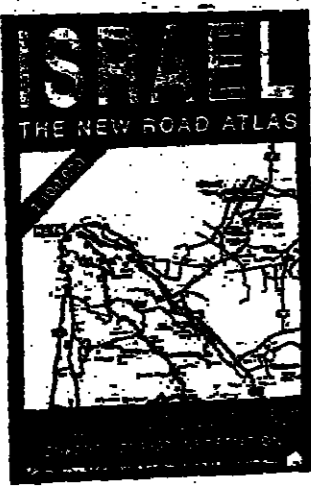
This group prefers more relaxing time at sea and fewer organized activities.



Photo courtesy of Princess Cruises

Many cruise lines have spiffy gadgets such as treadmills that take your pulse from the warmth of your hand and a "virtual" golf center let you "play" the world's best golf courses via 12-foot video screens.

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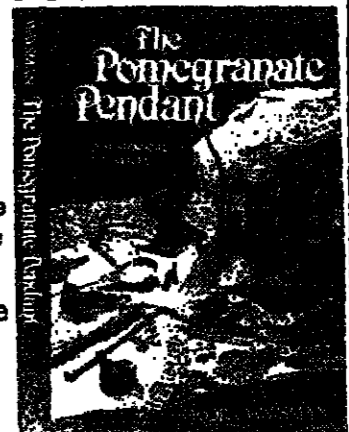
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Dancing on Board

The Music Begins with Gentlemen Hosts

By Alison DaRosa

Copley News Service

There were 22 single men—and 202 single women—aboard a cruise I took last fall through the Black Sea. Still, every woman aboard ship who wanted to dance eventually found a partner.

Six "gentlemen hosts" filled the gap. "It's my main reason for cruising on this ship," said Eleanor Vargo from Toronto. "I love to dance. My husband is at home. He doesn't dance. He doesn't even like to travel." "On other cruises, I sit and hear this wonderful music. With my feet tapping, I sit and I sit. There's nobody to dance with. I do dance here. And there are no strings attached. That's the other thing that I love," said Betty Gates, a widow from San Diego. "All

"I'm having a wonderful time waltzing my way around the world," he said.

fided. "But I'm nuts about dancing. I think it will ease some of the pain of missing my husband. And maybe I'll lose a few pounds."

After the hosts had danced a few numbers, and cocktail servers had made the rounds, the six hosts gathered on stage and introduced themselves. Ed Marx, a retired chemical engineer from Houston, explained that he was on his 50th cruise as a host with Royal Cruise Line.

"I'm having a wonderful time waltzing my way around the world," he said.

Mel Carey, another Texan, was on his second cruise as a host. Californian Burt Ophaug, a "semi-retired insurance agent" was on his third cruise. Carl Bayne of Maryland, also new to hosting, explained that he retired from NASA in 1989.

Mel Cook, from Portland, Oregon, explained that there would be no wallflowers on this cruise. "We want to dance with all of you," he said. "If perchance we miss you, let us know."

Roy Bigden from Portsmouth, England, the head host, officiated at a raffle that followed introductions. "You get to keep the champagne," he said, "but you don't get to keep the host."

Everybody laughed.

LET THE MUSIC BEGIN

Then the music started—and the hosts went to work. So did the cruise ship's photographer; later, the women would be able to buy proof that they'd danced all night.

"I'm Roy," said Bigden, as he held me at a respectable distance during a slow dance. "Where are you from? Guess where I'm from..." His small talk ended as abruptly as the music. When the dance was finished, he gently maneuvered me back to my seat. No lingering.

The next dance was fast—but none of the hosts sat it out. Priscilla Mills, a San Diego travel agent, jitterbugged so hard she broke her sandals.

"He was an excellent dancer," she said of her host partner. "But on the whole, these guys are better in the look department than they are in the dance department."

FIT THE HOST PROFILE?

Cruise lines' gentlemen hosts are not paid employees; they're volunteers. They get a free cruise, usually including air transportation between home and

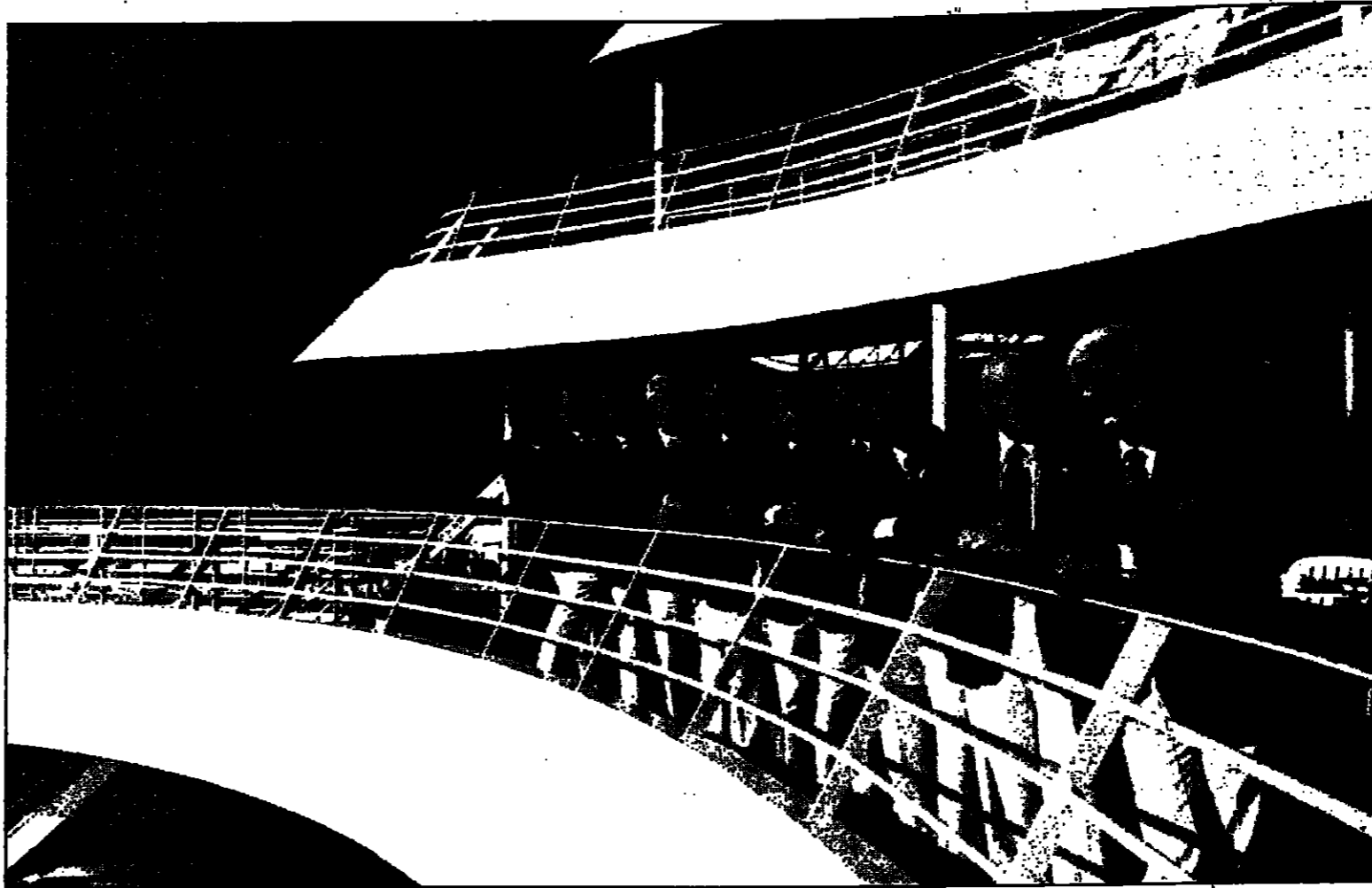


Photo by Alison Da Rosa

Besides knowing how to dance, gentlemen hosts must be single, sociable, gracious and at least 45 years old.

embarkation ports, in exchange for services. They work 14-hour days, seven days a week. Besides dancing, they lead dance classes, play cards, usher tour groups and dine with single women passengers.

Hosts typically share an inside cabin with another host. They get a small allowance for laundry and buying drinks aboard ship for women passengers. Hosts must be single, sociable, gracious, at least 45 years old—and must pack their own tuxedos and dinner jackets. They must also know how to dance.

"If anyone is thinking of doing this type of program, he might begin right away by looking at dance as a sport," said Lauretta Black of Santa Clara-based Working Vacations Inc., which screens potential hosts for nine cruise lines. "If you were going to play tennis at Wimbledon or golf in some professional tournament, wouldn't you get ready by taking golf or tennis lessons? You'd want to get back into the swing of the sport."

"Getting into the swing of being a gentleman host doesn't mean signing up with some chain for hours and hours of expensive lessons. It means going to dances at senior centers—and finding an independent dance instructor who could give you some private lessons. And it means practice, practice, practice."

"Not everybody really is cut out to do this sort of thing," Black said. "Gentlemen hosts have the responsibility of mixing and mingling with a wide variety of women—for the sport of dance and the sport of making fun and friendship with women. They are gentlemen with a great kindness of heart."

THE GIGOLO FACTOR

What about the gigolo factor? "No favoritism is allowed aboard ship," said Black.

"It's a dismissable offense to go to a lady's cabin," said Bigden. "The cruise director will put you off at the next port. I'm in support of that. The moment you start doing that, you're being unfair to the other ladies."

Romance may be against the rules, but one can always hope, said Marjorie Pugh, a big fan of the hosts and a repeat cruiser aboard Royal Cruise Line. "You could easily fall in love, if you let yourself," Pugh said.

And Bigden, 75, a retired commander in the Royal Navy, acknowledges that Pugh is right. He has a girlfriend, Lura "Rusty" Shaver of San Diego, Calif., the widow of a U.S. Navy captain. They met aboard the

Crown Odyssey, while he was hosting. A genuinely nice man, who still has the red-and-black dress his wife wore on the day they met and recalls that "Paper Doll" was the first song they danced to, Bigden has been widowed since 1981.

He didn't go into details, but Bigden said he and Shaver missed lunch in Venice. The others didn't mind. When the three-week cruise from Athens to San Juan was over, everybody exchanged addresses. That was nearly four years ago. Since then, Shaver's been to England four times to visit Bigden, and he's been to San Diego to visit her at least as many times.

Both Bigden and Shaver still cruise—but so far, never together when Bigden's a volunteer host. For information on cruise lines with hosts, contact your local travel agent.

For prospective hosts: Men at least 45 years old and interested in becoming gentleman hosts can contact Lauretta Black at The Working Vacation Inc., 4277 Lake Santa Clara Drive, Santa Clara, California 95054; (001) 408/737-9665.

Alison DaRosa is travel editor for The San Diego Union-Tribune.

New Year From page 1

dows. Sidewalks were clogged with people carrying parcels. Shops boasted signs which screamed: "Big Sale!"

Before the New Year begins, everyone makes a mad rush to buy new clothes, pay debts, clean house, end feuds, etc. This is done so that one can begin the New Year with a clean slate. Not to do so is to court bad luck.

At a bank near the flower fair, I noticed an avalanche of ATM (automated-teller machine) receipts on the ground, as people withdrew money for New Year's festivities and obligations. Banks, shops and hotels were flooded with decorations. Huge signs marked "Kung Hei Fat Choy," ("Have a happy and prosperous New Year") decorated the streets. Ten-story-tall pigs (1995 was the Year of the Pig), outlined in lights, stretched across the fronts of skyscrapers. Strips of red paper (the color red symbolizes good luck), painted with messages of wealth and longevity, were taped on doors.

By the time we reached the flower market, the crowds had grown into solid throngs. Couples with children in tow were busy making purchases of kumquat bushes or peach

sounds like "good business," and fish since it sounds like "plentiful."

New Year menus are elaborate spreads indeed, but they must be prepared early. Why? Because once the holiday begins, knives and scissors are put away for the entire period—using sharp instruments might cause bad luck. I learned, too, that brooms and vacuums are not used for fear they might sweep away good fortune.

As New Year's Eve wore on, I saw no sign that children were heading home for bedtime. Turns out, tykes are encouraged to stay up till past midnight. It is believed that their lives will be shortened if they are not awake for the start of the New Year.

Based on the lunar calendar, Chinese New Year can fall anywhere between January 21 and February 19. The Chinese lunar calendar is the longest chronological record in history, dating back to 2,637 B.C. In the lunar cycle, the years are named, in recurring chronological order, after 12 animals: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig. Moreover, each animal year is associated with different characteristics. A Tiger year, for example, is supposed to be extremely turbulent; a Monkey

ambitious, persistent, sociable and short-tempered. Some famous rats are Marlon Brando, Mozart, William Shakespeare, President Carter and Alan Alda.

I don't know if the kids got much sleep last night on New Year's Eve, but they were sure out in full force on the first day of the New Year. Day 1 is the time for wearing those new clothes, visiting temples to have your fortune told (one temple, Wong Tai Sin, had 80,000 visitors on a recent New Year's Day!), honoring your ancestors and getting together with family and close friends.

For kids and unmarried folks, this is also the day to receive *lai sie*, little red envelopes filled with lucky money (usually a gesture believed to bring good luck and prosperity to both giver and receiver).

Don't worry about catching a lion dance performance. You don't have to go looking for them. They'll find you. On this one day alone, I stumbled into these acrobatic dance troupes as I walked through the Peninsula Hotel. A little later, as I was putting away a festive meal at the Eaton Hotel, another "lion" (booming band in tow) roared into the dining room, stopping at each table, batting his huge eyelashes and making a deep bow to those who gave him a lucky money envelope.

Our Hong Kong friend and dinner companion moaned about the noisy lion. "I already had a headache." Well, that's the whole idea about lion dances: making lots of noise. The next day I would witness this ancient custom put into use in another way: Fireworks!

The fireworks were scheduled to take place at 8 p.m. over Victoria Harbour, one of the world's most dazzling ports. By 6 p.m., crowds were already thick. Many families had brought picnics; others whiled away the time checking out a street market which had just been set up. The waterfront area was not the only place to view the fireworks. Some folks watched from harborside restaurants, or the fabled Star Ferry, or even hotel rooms. Matter of fact, our own room at the Royal Pacific Hotel would have provided a magnificent bird's-eye-view of the spectacle.

The fireworks erupted at 8 p.m. on the dot, booming and thundering like some fantastic battle being waged. The sky was painted with bursts of gold, green, violet, raspberry. Adults were "oohed" and "aahed" as much as the kids. It was hard to picture a more thrilled crowd. Before long, the air was thick with smoke from the spent fireworks. Twenty-five minutes later, the last evil spirit had been shoed out of Hong Kong. Happy New Year!

Susan Farlow is a Maine-based freelance travel writer.



Amidst the holiday festivities, two teenagers take a minute to relax.

blossoms, lucky decorations for their homes. Age-old beliefs maintain that peach blossoms bring good luck in male-female relationships, while kumquat trees promise good fortune since "kum" sounds like the Chinese word for "gold." Earlier in the evening, these families had polished off their grand reunion dinner at which the entire family, including the spirits of their ancestors, had been assembled.

New Year's food reeks with symbolism and spiritual significance. Every dish is chosen for its auspicious association, and a New Year's Eve menu might include long strands of noodles for long life, oysters because the word in Cantonese

year, marked by innovation and creativity.

Legend has it that when Lord Buddha summoned all the earth's animals to him before he departed for heaven, only these 12 animals showed up to bid him farewell. He rewarded them by naming a year after each. And guess who showed up first? The rat. In 1996, the Lunar New Year arrives on February 19, the beginning of the Year of the Rat.

The Rat year should be one of opportunity and success, a good time to launch new projects and ventures.

And what if you were born in a Rat year—1900, 1912, 1924, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996? You are likely to be honest,

TRAVELER

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CHINESE NEW YEAR IN HONG KONG

WHEN TO GO

For 1996, most Chinese New Year festivities will be held over a three-day period, from February 19-21. (Traditionally, though, the holiday is 15 days long and Hong Kong residents still observe this fully.)

Keep in mind that, on the first three days of the festival (February 19-21), many businesses and shops are closed. So, if you happen to be in Hong Kong over this time, be sure you arrive before or leave after the New Year public holiday.

YOU'RE AN ANIMAL

The Rat if born in 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996. People born during these years are noted for their charm and fun-loving nature. They are very generous and loved ones. Honest and very compassionate, even to their enemies.

The Ox if born in 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985. People born during these years are patient, hard working and fine character. Especially true of those born very southern. Have no great mind and late to fall.

The Tiger if born in 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986. People born during these years are fierce, warm-hearted, sensitive, rebellious and daring. Known for their vigilance. Can be short-tempered and processional.

The Rabbit if born in 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987. People born during these years are lucky, kind and seldom angry. Tend to lead quiet lives and counting, rabbits tend to avoid confrontations.

The Dragon if born in 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988. People born during these years are noted for their strength, energy, passion and determination. They are very confident and get angry quickly; they are soft-hearted creatures.

The Snake if born in 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989. People born during these years are very intelligent and lucky with money. Many have talents in determining.

The Horse if born in 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990. People born during these years are cheerful, joyful and smart with money. They are too busy to be very sentimental, quick temper and self-indulgent.

The Sheep if born in 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991. People born during these years are mild-mannered and creative. May become angry if provoked, but they are shy.

The Monkey if born in 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992. People born during these years are clever, inventive and inquisitive. Good sense of humor and self-confidence. Tend to be vain.

The Rooster if born in 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993. People born during these years are deep thinkers, opinionated and proud. They are very loyal and to fall. Like to be noticed.

The Dog if born in 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994. People born during these years are truthful, honest, intelligent and not keep a secret.

The Pig if born in 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995. People born during these years are quiet, studious and have high ideas. Honest and hard working. Takes forever to make a decision.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Hong Kong Tourist Association, 610 Enterprise Drive, Suite 200, Chicago, Illinois 60621. (001) 708/573-2828, FAX (001) 708/573-2828



Husbands: Listen more, solve less

DEAR RUTHIE
RUTHIE BLOM

Dear Ruthie, My wife accuses me of being indifferent to her problems. After 18 years of marriage, I can tell you this is outrageous! I have been responsible for my "back of interest" for 18 years. For years we fought bitterly every time she complained about something. As soon as I offered my help or made suggestions, she attacked me for trying to run her life. So I stopped taking part in these discussions.

This was an attempt to salvage our marriage, not destroy it. I am really baffled and would like your input.

Suspicious Spouse
Somewhere in Israel

Dear SS,
It is very common for men to regard problems as "things to be solved." Interpreting your wife's complaining to be a request for a remedy, your response was to "provide" proper treatment for her ailments. But your wife was apparently not interested in being "cured" and took your assistance to be an attempt at "controlling her life."

Not wanting to be told what to do is very different from not wanting to be heard. Women tend to find the process of airing their problems cathartic. You ceased taking part in this kind of interaction as a way of avoiding conflict. But denying your wife the opportunity to think aloud has caused her to consider you indifferent.

Your options are not limited to problem-solving or apathy. A third possibility is to listen with empathy. A foot massage couldn't hurt,

either.
Dear Ruthie,
I saw a film on TV about anorexia. It suddenly occurred to me that my great-granddaughter may be suffering from it. I spoke to my grandson (her father) about my fears, but he was more amused than concerned. "You think everybody needs fattening up!" is what he said. This may be true. I am from a different generation, which doesn't consider skin and bones to be healthy or attractive. Still, I think I am not exaggerating. My great-granddaughter would listen to me, even if I wanted to say something to her. I am worried, and do not know what else to do.
Anxious About Anorexia
Nahariya

Dear AAA,
If your great-granddaughter indeed is anorexic, you are right to be worried. You were also right to discuss your fears with her father. Perhaps his amusement was justified, and his daughter is fashionably slender, rather than starving herself to death. As long as you continue to believe there is cause for concern, however, do not allow your grandson's attitude to silence you. Speak to his wife, as well. Whether or not you are right, it is likely that your grandson heard what you said. A seed has been planted in his mind, which will be difficult to ignore, no matter how hard he laughs at your old-fashioned ideas about weight.

Letters should be addressed to: Dear Ruthie, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem. For E-mail, editors@post.co.il (Ruthie regrets not being able to guarantee publication of every letter, but will answer every letter received.)

Nothing beats being lost, then found

Each year, several thousand Israelis are reported missing. 'Netz' is prepared to find them. Ori Golan reports



Nati Sagi (right) and his partner Zaki Zuriel: When it comes to a search, time is of the essence.

A recently married yeshiva student disappeared, leaving behind a pregnant and very worried wife.

The police have limited resources for dealing with some 3,000 disappearances each year. So his family turned to Netz ("Hawk"), a private investigation company that specializes in locating missing people.

Netz agents infiltrated a number of yeshivot in search of him. That case was particularly tricky," recalls Nati Sagi, a former GSS agent who started the company a year ago. "These are people who are very suspicious and the investigation was complicated."

The young man was eventually found, confused and exhausted, living in squalid conditions in a yeshiva in the north.

"We are not competing with, or working against, the Israeli police force," Sagi stresses. "We are merely offering the public an alternative framework in which to search for their missing relatives. With some 3,000 cases of disappearances each year, the police cannot do a thorough job on each case."

And with an 85 percent success record in their first year, Sagi and his partner Zaki Zuriel, also a former GSS agent, are already preparing for a busy future.

Netz, Sagi says proudly, does not work on a priority basis and doesn't have a 48-hour waiting period between the time a request for help is registered and when the search begins.

"Our response reaction is immediate," Sagi explains. "We begin our work as soon as we are notified on our 24-hour telephone line."

"Immediately upon notification, we set up a profile of the missing person: age, profession, place and circumstances of disappearance, etc. Our success hinges on quick, efficient work."

"Time, as we see it, is the essence. The longer we wait, not only does it make the search more complicated, since the person is able to get further away, but the chances of finding the missing person in good health are reduced. We not only want to find the person, but we want to find him alive and well."

Netz assigns a team of two investigators and a psychologist to each case. The psychologist, Zuriel claims, is an indispensable part of the team.

"Not long ago," Sagi says, "a well-known and respected lecturer came here in search of his wife who had disappeared two weeks previously. He came with their two children and painted a rosy picture of family life and matrimonial harmony."

"It was only through our psychologist that we got to the bottom of the story. It transpired that the man's wife fell victim to his

half-truths and details which they try and cover up.

"Apart from helping build the missing person's profile, the psychologist manages to tease out bits of information from the family which they would otherwise not divulge, information which can often be crucial in locating the missing person."

"You have to understand that 68 percent of those reported missing disappear following clashes at home. Often, families in pursuit of a missing relative choose not to give you the whole story. Their stories are frequently riddled with

violent temper and had fled their home after he had assaulted her. We eventually tracked her down to a women's shelter in a different part of the country."

Netz's investigators use jeeps, helicopters, and high-tech communication equipment in their searches.

"We teach them all the tricks of the trade," Zuriel smiles, "everything from how to present a picture of a missing person to members of the public down to the fine details of field work. If they need to take on a fake identity or dress up in order to merge into a certain crowd, then they know how to do it."

Several months ago, an industrialist hired Netz to search for his runaway daughter. After setting up a profile, Sagi and Zuriel, along with the psychologist, concluded that she was working as a prostitute. Two of their investigators posed as potential clients and combed the classified ads in the newspapers and visited escort agencies.

After two months, they recognized her voice when they responded to an advertisement and arranged to meet her. At that point, they contacted her family, who arranged for a relative to turn up for the meeting and persuade her to return home.

Netz's fees depend on the nature and scale of the investigation.

"Setting up a profile costs NIS 300," Zuriel says. "As for the searches and field work, this can amount to a heavy sum, especially if we need to use helicopters and other expensive means."

But money isn't what drives them.

"When, after weeks of tedious work, you manage to unravel the story behind a person's disappearance and when you finally bring it to a happy end, there is a feeling of relief and deep satisfaction," Sagi says. "Nothing beats that!"

Sierra Leone: West Africa's tragic basket case

The economy is plundered by the military government, the country's interior is in the hands of sadistic young soldiers from both the army and rebels. This is Sierra Leone.

Immortalized by Graham Greene's seedy but affectionate portrayal in *The Heart of the Matter*, it is now a basket case, even by the shambolic standards of West Africa.

Britain, the former colonial power, still wields considerable influence in Freetown, the capital. It is said that nothing happens there without the knowledge of the UK High Commissioner, Ian McCluney.

Indeed, Greene himself would have relished the fact that, only two years ago, McCluney recommended a certain Julius Maada Bio, the then No. 2 in the junta, for a place on a "Management of Change" course in Britain. The course was completed, but its lessons seem to have been ignored or, perhaps, learned only too well. Last month, Bio ousted the president, the 50-year-old disloyal Capt. Valentine Strasser. Now he is spending millions of pounds on his state residence, hardly the mark of a man preparing to step down at this month's polls. Stories such as these reinforce the impression of Africa as a continent of banana republics, a source of amusing anecdotes for the rest of the "civilized" world. The reality for the people who live there is more tragic.

AFRICA INURES you to suffering, but nothing prepared Francis

ALEC RUSSELL
SIERRA LEONE

Momoh for the night the rebels came to his door to chop off his hands. It was midnight and he was asleep. "I started to run to the bush but the machete-wielders were waiting there too. One of them started hacking at my head... I can see his face now. He couldn't have been more than 12 or 13."

"I tried to fend off the blade with my right hand. He sliced through my fingers. Then he began to saw away at my left hand." Momoh is one of 58 patients in the Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) clinic in Sierra Leone's second largest city of Bo. In the past two months all have lost a hand, some both, and others feet as well. There they sit after day begging visitors for false limbs.

"People have lost all hope," said the Rev. Jacob Johnson, a Methodist minister. "They take one day at a time." But, had he and Momoh known it, there was one event last week which might have sown a seed of hope. President Jacques Chirac of France flew to Washington claiming to have their plight very much on his mind.

The French leader was to discuss Africa with President Clinton, and, as its roll call of military leaders grows by the week, West Africa was topping the agenda. Last week Niger suffered a coup. Now it seems like Guinea's turn. Chirac's thesis, that the West

ignores Africa's travails, was irrefutable.

His conclusion, that we should reassess our policies on the region, makes sense. But the key question is still - how to help? Sitting in her tropical garden in Freetown, Zainab Bangura, one of West Africa's foremost human rights activists, claimed to have the solution.

"You have to get tough with our tin-pot leaders," she said. "Diplomacy does not work with them. For example it should be made clear that if our elections [due on February 26] are postponed, all aid will be cut off."

"More than that the West must stop treating these guys with respect. African despots like nothing more than jetting about. But they should not be allowed to travel."

Columbists in Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, last week echoed Bangura's refrain, but Western diplomats in the continent politely dismiss such ideas. "It just doesn't work," said one ambassador. "Look at Gaddafi. He's still in power. Dialogue is the only game in town, and you back



Diamond workers pan alluvial deposits into baskets on the banks of a river in Freetown.

it up by using IMF and World Bank loans as the carrot to bring reform."

West Africa's problems are no different from the rest of the continent. Unequal division of

resources, an increasing gap between rich and poor and the politics of personality and patron-

age all play a part. (The Sunday Telegraph)

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1996

Work starts on PA industrial parks

PINCHAS INBARI

INFRASTRUCTURE work on the first Palestinian industrial parks will be completed within six months, at which it will be prepared to absorb new enterprises, Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir said yesterday after meeting with Palestinian Industry Minister Ahmed Qurei, also known as Abu Ala.

Work on the Karmi site in the Gaza Strip has already started, and diplomatic sources said work will begin in upcoming weeks on sites at Muqibla outside Jenin and Kedouri near Kalkilya.

Analysts said the aftermath of the meeting between Savir and Qurei may reflect a turning point in PA head Yasser Arafat's attitude toward the industrial parks, a concept to which he was opposed until recently since it involves a high degree of cooperation with the Israeli business sector.

Another aspect which makes Arafat balk in face of the plan is his recommendation that taxation and security within the zones be the responsibility of the companies running them.

It is believed that after a confer-

'Banks not following guidelines must return losses to customers'

Central bank issues stern warning

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

THE Bank of Israel announced yesterday it will force the commercial banks to offset losses suffered by customers whose credit limits were exceeded due to portfolio managers' abuse of their power of attorney and the banks' failure to operate in accordance with the central bank's directives on the issue.

Supervisor of Banks Ze'ev Abeles said the banks have clear instructions not to allow a portfolio manager to go over a customer's credit limit for more than a two-day period.

Abeles was referring to the Bank Hapoalim and Bank Massad Haifa episode, which was revealed yesterday morning following Army Radio business reporter Yuval Landau's broadcast of interviews with dozens of customers.

The customers said they accumulated large debts, because Bank Hapoalim and Bank Massad cooperated with Eli Drari, a private portfolio manager. The customers said the banks allowed Drari to go over their approved credit limits by hundreds of percent.

According to the radio broadcast, Drari offered to manage customers' securities account and in exchange promised them a fixed monthly profit, irrespective of the performance of the securities on the stock exchange.

The broadcast said the method was simple — Drari sent his customer to the Bank Massad branch situated under his office on Herzl Street in Haifa or to the nearby Bank Hapoalim.

The customers deposited their money and signed documents to approve their credit limits, and give power of attorney to Drari. He then started to manage the cus-



Abeles: Banks have clear instructions on portfolio managers. (Tax O)

tomers' portfolios.

The broadcast said that when the customers realized Drari was exceeding their approved credit limit, they informed bank officials — who said it was "Drari's problem."

A customer was heard saying, "My credit limit was NIS 40,000. Immediately after they [Drari] started to buy shares, they purchased securities for about NIS 78,000. When we approached them [the bank], they said you don't have anything to worry about, everything is okay. Today, I have to return debts of NIS 73,000 and have been left without money or shares."

In reaction, Bank Hapoalim said the appropriate organizations are dealing with the customers' complaints. Bank Massad, which is a subsidiary of Hapoalim, said the episode is being examined.

Drari said the banks gave him money, because he brought them new customers. "People lost a lot of money and so did I. They gave me, personally, NIS 500,000, and

IAI in deals with Poland, Hungary

STEVE RODAN

ISRAELI Aircraft Industries has signed contracts to develop communications for two Eastern European countries, executives said yesterday.

In one deal, Malam — IAI's electronic division — won a contract to develop a modern communications system in the Pila region of north-west Poland. Executives said the contract is with a European consortium for which IAI will plan for optical cables, as well as data relay and broadcast stations.

IAI also signed a contract with Hungary for the development of a commercial communications satellite. IAI director Moshe Keret said the signing was the firm's first achievement in entering the world satellite market after years of development. Keret expressed hope that local communications satellite Amos will be launched in the coming months.

S. Africa's growth at 7-year high

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) — South Africa's economy grew by 3.3 percent in 1995, the highest rate of expansion in seven years, after 2.7% in 1994, the Central Statistical Service said yesterday.

But the pace of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) slowed somewhat in the fourth quarter as manufacturing industry started to run up against capacity constraints.

Most economists said the recovery should regain momentum in 1996, this time buoyed by a strong rebound in agriculture after the country's parched farms received the best rains in years.

Annualized GDP growth dipped to 2.7% in the three months to end-December from 3.0% in the

third quarter, as manufacturing contracted by 2.8% after a long run of rapid expansion.

"After that surge, it's not surprising there has been some pull back in manufacturing... I wouldn't view this as any serious slowdown," said Dave Mohr, economist at leading insurer Old Mutual.

Mohr said he was still expecting growth of over 4% in 1996, possibly beating the 4.2% recorded in 1988 — which would make 1996 the best year for growth since 1981.

Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals also painted an upbeat outlook picture for the economy on Tuesday, telling reporters: "It is not over-optimistic to talk about [real GDP growth of] 4% for 1996."

He noted that accelerated growth, following declines in GDP at the start of the decade during the darkest days of apartheid, had started to strain South Africa's manufacturing capacity.

But heavy investment in the last two years was now adding to capacity, he said.

Much of the recovery this year will come from the primary sector, where heavy rains could double the all-important maize crop from last year's 4.23 million tonnes.

At the same time, the country's hard-pressed gold mining industry should start to recover, helped by bullion's push above \$400 an ounce, after last year's 10.5% plunge in gold output and stagnant prices.

But stripping out the primary sector, which dragged down the economy last year, the picture is not quite as rosy.

ABSA economist Adam Jacobs said the non-primary economy will struggle to maintain last year's growth, particularly given the strength of the rand which will hamper exports.

"The rand will have to give some ground to keep our industry internationally competitive," he said.

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5. No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid, or to order the entire work from one source.

Bids sent by fax or telegram will not be considered.

Bezeq, Ministry clash over prices

EVELYN GORDON

BEZEQ wants to lower its prices for international calls and calling cards, but the Communications Ministry will not let it, Bezeq deputy managing director Ze'ev Zeevi told the Knesset State Control Committee's consumer affairs subcommittee yesterday.

Zeevi said the company has wanted "for a long time" to lower both international rates and the price of its Bezeqcard calling cards, but the ministry has refused.

However, Communications Ministry director-general Shlomo Wachs replied that the company had not just asked permission to lower international rates. Bezeq had asked that this reduction be part of a package which would include an increase in rates for local phone calls, and this the ministry was not willing to accept.

Both subcommittee chairman Ra'anan Cohen (Labor) and Dan Tichon (Likud) said it was not clear, due to the conflicting versions, what was going on, but it seemed like the consumer was the loser in the battle between the ministry and the company.

The two MKs therefore said they intended to initiate legislation setting up a public authority to oversee all communications services.

Tower Semiconductor reports increase in net profit

COMPANY RESULTS RACHEL NEIMAN

from \$57.7m., while earnings per share rose to \$1.76 from \$1.03. Tower executed a second share offering in July of last year, raising \$92.9m.

Aladdin Knowledge Systems has announced a rise in fourth quarter net profits to \$924,000 from \$774,000.

However, Wachs continued, the ministry would permit the company to lower its international rates next month, when the tender for a second international carrier is issued.

In the meantime, he said, consumers are not really suffering, because international rates have gone down 40%, in real terms, since January 1994.

Teledata said it would be investing resources and engineering efforts to reduce costs and increase margins in 1996.

Together with its annual report, Teledata announced that president Robert Hartman would be leaving the company by the end of the year and would continue until that time to serve in a limited executive role.

For the past year, Hartman shared management responsibilities with Joseph Atsmon, who continues on as CEO.

Last year Atsmon oversaw Teledata's restructuring

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patish (foreign currency deposit rates) (13.2.96)

Currency (deposit term)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.25	4.25	4.25
U.S. dollar (\$100,000)	4.25	4.25	4.25
U.S. dollar (\$50,000)	4.25	4.25	4.25
Pound sterling (£100,000)	4.75	4.75	4.75
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.75	1.75	2.00
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.25	0.25	0.75
Yen (10 million yen)	—	—	—

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit.)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (13.2.96)

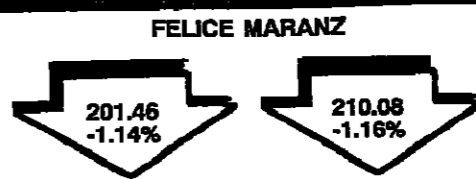
Currency basket	Buy	Sell	BANKNOTES	Buy	Sell	RESERVE	Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	3.492	3.504	—	—	—	—	—	—
German mark	3.091	3.140	—	—	—	—	—	
French franc	2.284	2.279	—	—	—	—	—	
Swiss franc	4.779	4.804	—	—	—	—	—	
Japanese yen (100)	0.0056	0.0186	—	—	—	—	—	
British pound	2.802	2.838	—	—	—	—	—	
Italian lira (1000)	1.278	1.870	—	—	—	—	—	
Spanish peseta (100)	2.393	2.877	—	—	—	—	—	
Australian dollar	0.448	0.492	—	—	—	—	—	
New Zealand dollar	0.474	0.482	—	—	—	—	—	
Canadian dollar	0.516	0.520	—	—	—	—	—	
South African rand	0.678	0.887	—	—	—	—	—	
Indian rupee (10)	2.251	2.294	—	—	—	—	—	
Israeli sheqel (10)	2.504	2.580	—	—	—	—	—	
Portuguese escudo (10)	0.973	0.970	—	—	—	—	—	
Chinese yuan (1000)	1.012	1.037	—	—	—	—	—	
Egyptian pound	2.378	8.028	—	—	—	—	—	
Iranian rial (1000)	1.888	2.006	—	—	—	—	—	
South Korean won (100)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Thai baht	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Israeli sheqel (10)	3.251	3.512	—	—	—	—	—	
Israeli sheqel (100)	4.857	4.831	—	—	—	—	—	
Israeli sheqel (1000)	2.488	2.520	—	—	—	—	—	

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

Inflation fears drop indexes

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET



STOCK indexes fell for a second day amid concern inflation is accelerating...

the elections will there be peace and an economic plan," he said.

The Maof index fell 1.16 percent to 210.08 and the Two-Sided Index fell 1.44% to 201.46.

Investors are also concerned about a weakening dollar compared to the shekel, Kraus said.

Forecasts for January's Consumer Price Index increase, due to be announced today after the exchange closes, have ranged as high as 1.3%.

High interest rates draw investment dollars, which are then converted into shekels and deposited.

"There's a real lack of faith regarding economic policy," said Dror Kraus, a broker with Tel Aviv investment firm Haron & Lavi.

As more investors trade dollars for shekels, the price of the dollar declines and the shekel strengthens.

The Bank of Israel last increased rates on February 1, when the rate at which it lends to banks rose to 14% from 13.7%.

Exporters, paying expenses in shekels and earning in dollars, suffer lower profits as the dollar weakens against the shekel.

Of 998 issues trading across the exchange, more than five times as many shares fell as rose.

The shekel traded at 3.1130 to the dollar, compared to 3.1220 last Friday.

A week earlier, the shekel traded at 3.1420. Only one share on the Maof Index rose: Osem Investments Ltd., which gained 1%.

Investors perceived declines in the share earlier this week as having been exaggerated, said Kraus.

The declines followed losses in Koor's American Depository Receipts traded in New York, which fell Tuesday 1/4 to 19%.

News reports have speculated Swiss concern Nestle was buying shares in Osem. Officials at Nestle which holds an option to buy 10 percent of Osem's common stock, refused to comment.

On February 6, Tel Aviv investment firm Meita Ltd. reported that assets held by mutual funds fell to NIS 16.01 billion shekels at the end of January from NIS 16.10b. at the end of December.

The Renaissance Fund, connected to Israeli investment firm Claridge, announced this week that it had purchased 3.2% of Osem on February 5, bringing its stake in the food company up to 24%.

"The public is not in the market and the professionals are selling," said Kraus.

Declining chemical shares on the Maof Index included 'Israel' Chemicals Ltd., which fell 2%, and Dead Sea Bromine Ltd., which fell 0.5%.

Kraus pointed to Discount Investment Corp., which has declined 7% from February 4 through Tuesday, even though it received an endorsement from the Union Bank of Switzerland.

Index-listed banks fell amid news reports that kibbutzim may seek to reassess the debts they owe to banks.

Investors have mixed feelings regarding early elections, expected to be held in late May or early June, said Kraus.

Reports that local banks inflated interest on debts owed them by kibbutzim have prompted declining share prices since last week. According to some assessments, the banks could in fact owe the kibbutzim money.

Advancing the elections is seen as pushing ahead the peace process and economic reform, he said. At the same time, investors are concerned that Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who is leading in polls, has not done enough to improve the economy.

Bank Leumi fell 1.25%, and First International Bank of Israel decreased 1% (Bloomberg)

FTSE drops 2.6 points

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Leading shares ended mixed, resisting the temptation to follow a weaker Dow, down around 30 points, in the light of the US market's recent volatility.

The FTSE closed 2.6 points down at 3,745.0.

FRANKFURT - German shares end stagnant bourse trade lower with little prospect for recovery in the post-bourse session.

PARIS - French shares finished lower, weighed down by weaker bond prices, a drop in the franc and a fall in early trading on Wall Street.

Sentiment cautious, consolidation seen continuing until DAX average was off 21.68 points at 5,379.55, backtracking from Tuesday's record of 5,601.23.

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Blue-chip stocks closed with double digit losses yesterday as heavy profit-taking broke the market's seven-session run into the record books.

The Dow Jones industrial average was off 21.68 points at 5,379.55, backtracking from Tuesday's record of 5,601.23.

Based on early and unofficial data, the Dow Jones industrial average was off 21.68 points at 5,379.55, backtracking from Tuesday's record of 5,601.23.

STERLING 2.258292 - 163.91/03 1.845682 7.481778

YEN 1.378486 0.809404 - 1.124181 4.743215

SFR 122.3453 0.541725 88.8598 - 4.217720

FFR 0.250003 0.120485 21.0308 0.236871

MARK STERLING YEN SFR FFR

MARK STERLING YEN SFR FFR

Key Representative Rates

US dollar...NIS 3.1130 +0.13%
Sterling...NIS 4.7804 +0.54%
Mark...NIS 2.1173 +0.58%

NYSE STOCK MARKETS

New York market indexes

Table with columns: Index Name, Last, Change. Includes DJ Industrial, DJ Transport, etc.

Other stock market indexes

Table with columns: Index Name, Last, Change. Includes FTSE 100, Nikkei 225, etc.

Israeli stocks in NY

Table with columns: NYSE / AMEX, Last, Change. Lists various Israeli companies.

Libor rates

Table with columns: Rate, Last, Change. Lists various Libor rates.

Foreign financing data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd.

Text providing details on foreign financing data.

US commodities

Table with columns: Commodity, Last, Change. Lists various commodities.

London commodities

Table with columns: Commodity, Last, Change. Lists various London commodities.

Spot market metals (US)

Table with columns: Metal, Last, Change. Lists various spot market metals.

New York metal futures

Table with columns: Metal, Last, Change. Lists various New York metal futures.

London metal fixes

Table with columns: Metal, Last, Change. Lists various London metal fixes.

Currency cross-rates

Table with columns: Currency, Last, Change. Lists various currency cross-rates.

Commodity trading Ltd.

Contact information for Commodity Trading Ltd.

TEL AVIV STOCKS

Multi-sided trading

Table of stock prices under Multi-sided trading, including Commercial, Banks, and Industrials.

Two-sided trading

Table of stock prices under Two-sided trading, including Investment Companies and Property, Building & Agriculture.

Trade & Services

Table of stock prices under Trade & Services, including various service-oriented companies.

MORNING

Table of stock prices under MORNING, including various companies.

Oil Exploration

Table of stock prices under Oil Exploration, including oil-related companies.

PARALLEL LIST

Table of stock prices under PARALLEL LIST, including various companies.

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

NEW YORK

Table of international stock prices under NEW YORK, including various companies.

LONDON

Table of international stock prices under LONDON, including various companies.

PARIS

Table of international stock prices under PARIS, including various companies.

FRANKFURT

Table of international stock prices under FRANKFURT, including various companies.

Police to open first station in east Jerusalem

BILL HUTMAN and STEVE RODAN

POLICE will open their first station ever in the Arab sector of eastern Jerusalem soon, to improve service to Arab residents and better fight the attempted infiltration by Palestinian Authority security agents into the city.

The station is to be located in the main post office building on Salah A-Din Street, just outside Herod's Gate and in the heart of the Arab business district of Jerusalem, police sources said.

Dept. Cmdr. Ya'acov Shrental, Jerusalem police bureau chief, has led a team that over the past several weeks has been finalizing details about the establishment and operations of the new eastern Jerusalem police station.

Police for years have discussed the need for a station in eastern Jerusalem, and several times even announced one would be set up, but never followed through. In the latest case, however, with the strong backing of the Internal Security Ministry, the move has been finalized.

The sources said renovation work would begin in the coming days on the offices in the post office building that are to be turned into a station, and estimated it would be opened within about two months.

Moshe Sasson, Arab affairs advisor to Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, told the Post yesterday that "there has been a vacuum too long in police operations in eastern Jerusalem that has left room for the likes of (PA preventive security chief Jibril) Rajoub."

"We hope to have a police station opened on Salah A-Din Street in two to three weeks," that will begin filling that vacuum, Sasson said. Jerusalem police sources, however, emphasized the more traditional police work that would be conducted by the station, and said Palestinian Jerusalemites themselves had pushed for the station in hopes of improving crime-fighting in their neighborhoods.

The station will be manned by Arabic-speaking policemen. It will also have facilities for taking residents' complaints, according to the sources. If the station proves a success, other new stations in eastern Jerusalem are likely to follow, the sources said.



Pupils at Himmelfarb High School in Jerusalem's Bayit Vegan section yesterday practice studying under emergency conditions, as part of a nationwide drill of the Home Front Command. (Brian Hadden)

Shahal: More funds needed to combat car theft

LIAT COLLINS

INTERNAL Security Minister Moshe Shahal yesterday repeated his demand for more police manpower and a greater budget to combat car thefts.

Shahal presented the Knesset Interior Committee with the report by the interministerial committee report on the subject, which was led by General (res.) Ya'acov Lapidot, and said the police need 533 extra manpower positions and more equipment to deal with the problem, at a cost of NIS 100 million. Shahal said he would request this budget at the next Cabinet meeting.

Committee chairman Yehoshua Matza called on the prime minister to immediately intervene and forward the necessary funds. He also called on the government to stand firm on demands that the Palestinian Police cooperate in fighting the problem of car thefts, in accordance with the Oslo Accords.

Matza expressed pessimism that the report's findings could be implemented in the immediate future because of the early elections. He also said he feared the report would be filed away like its predecessor from 1993.

"This is not a report destined for the back of the drawer. The report will be implemented and immediately," Shahal said.

Matza said he feared "the thieves who sneak in from the territories under Palestinian Authority control and steal cars from the homes of Israeli citizens in the middle of the night could also, heaven forbid, in the same way carry out a terror attack."

He asked the committee's legal advisor to begin drawing up legislation banning the import of spare parts from the territories, a step supported in principle by Shahal.

Peretz, Shohat try to resolve Rafael dispute

DAVID HEDGE

HISTADRUT Chairman Amir Peretz met Finance Minister Avraham Shohat last night in an effort to resolve the ongoing dispute at Rafael, where workers again demonstrated yesterday.

Union officials said some progress had been made on several issues, but there are still differences over the Histadrut and workers' demands to defer for two years proposals to turn Rafael into a public company.

The upbeat reports on the negotiations failed, however, to prevent more disturbances at the armaments-development authority plant, south of Acre.

Temper flared over when one of the 70 workers who have been on hunger strike near the factory gates since Sunday morning was suddenly taken ill. He was rushed to the hospital with a suspected heart attack.

Workers inside the plant downed tools when they learned of the matter and gathered near the gates, where the hunger strikers, who are among 90 employees facing dismissal, have pitched a protest tent.

The angry workers blocked the factory gates and set alight a pile of tires. During the demonstration, another of the hunger strikers was also taken ill and had to receive medical treatment.

David Zuckerman, chairman of the workers' action committee, called on Prime Minister Shimon Peres to accept the Histadrut's proposals to resolve the Rafael crisis and "end the suffering of the workers."

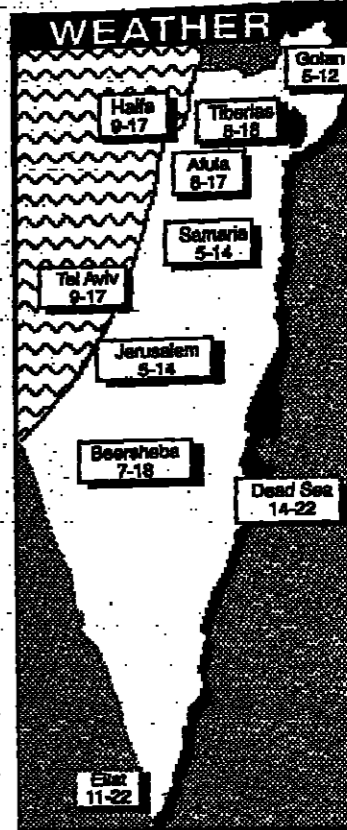
He warned that a tragedy could occur at the plant, given the state of health of the hunger strikers, and the angry and bitter mood of the employees.

The Histadrut and the workers say the cutbacks in the work force proposed by management can be achieved by voluntary retirements rather than lay offs.

They have agreed to 400 employees leaving of their own accord provided there will be no more dismissals until the end of 1997. The remaining workers are also willing to accept a wage cut of around nine percent over the same period.

In return they are pressing the Treasury, the Defense Ministry, and management to give a commitment to defer plans to turn Rafael into a public company for at least two years.

Yigal Cohen, head of the trade union department in the Histadrut's Haifa branch, said agreements had been reached with the Treasury, after three days of talks, on most of the issues, including severance pay terms and pension rights.



Forecast: Partly cloudy.

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	HIGH	Cloudy
Amsterdam	10	15	cloudy
Berlin	10	15	cloudy
Bombay	25	30	cloudy
Buenos Aires	15	20	cloudy
Chicago	10	15	cloudy
Hong Kong	20	25	cloudy
London	10	15	cloudy
Los Angeles	15	20	cloudy
Manila	25	30	cloudy
Medan	25	30	cloudy
Paris	10	15	cloudy
Perth	15	20	cloudy
Rangoon	25	30	cloudy
Singapore	25	30	cloudy
Taipei	20	25	cloudy
Tokyo	10	15	cloudy
Yokohama	10	15	cloudy

Winning cards

n yesterday's Mifal Hapais day-ly Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the king of spades, king of hearts, jack of diamonds, and ten of clubs.

Haggai Amir pleads innocent

HAGGAI AMIR, accused of conspiring to murder prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, yesterday pleaded not guilty in Tel Aviv District Court, saying he only heard about what his brother Yigal had done, and about his earlier attempts to kill Rabin, after the fact.

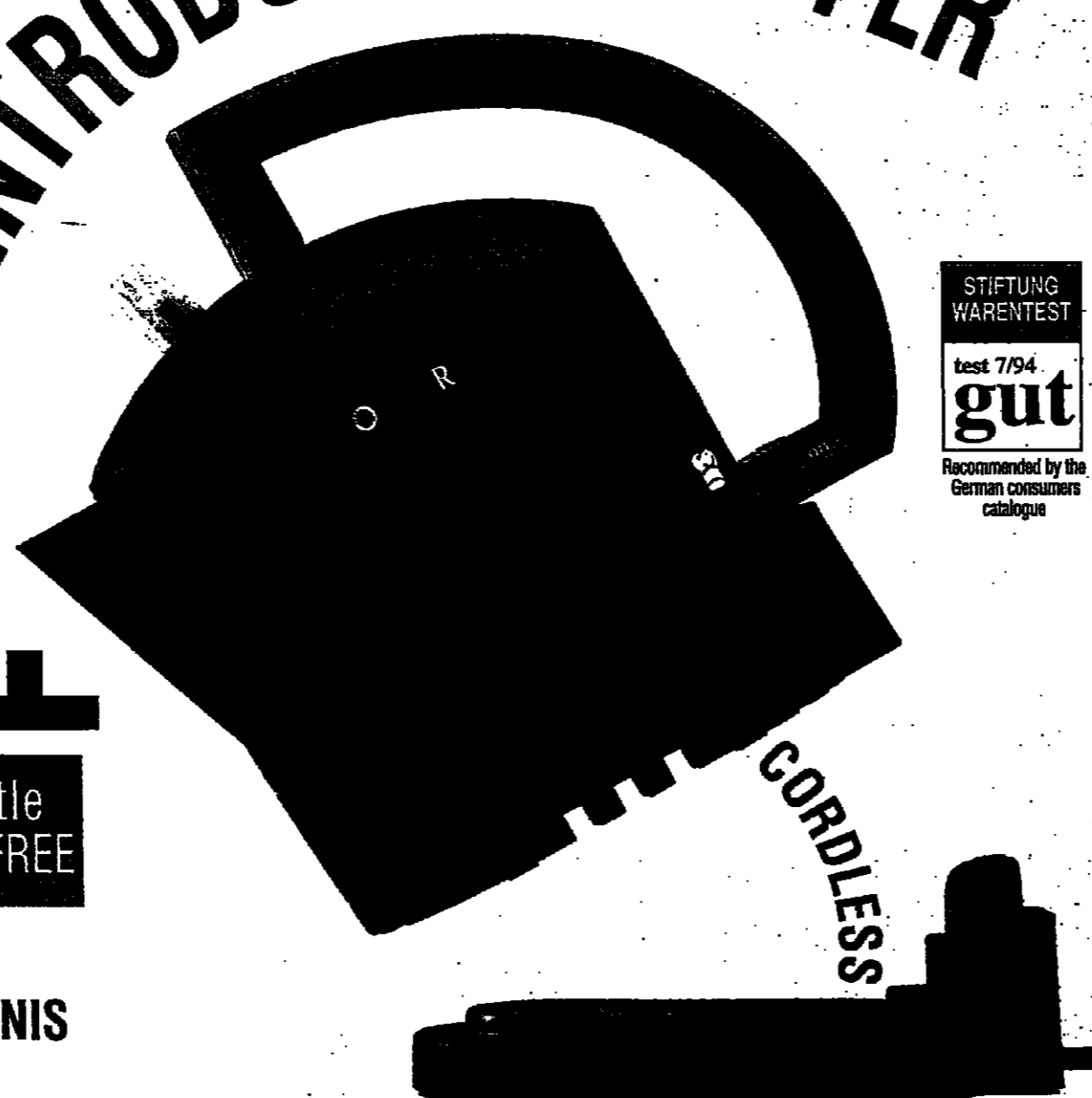
His lawyer, Moshe Meroz, also asked for a separate hearing on the admissibility of the statements his client made to his interrogators, which he said were illegally obtained.

Meanwhile, lawyer Zion Amir, representing Dror Edui, also accused of conspiring to murder Rabin, asked to have the Prisons Service move his client from Shatta Prison near Afula to one in the center of the country, to make it easier to meet with him. Yigal Amir is being held at Hasharon Prison and his brother at Nitzan Prison.

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3 ONE-DAY TRIPS

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Spend a day away-from-it-all on one of Shorashim's entertaining and enlightening English speaking trips. You'll meet your sort of people, visit off-the-beaten-track places and hear interesting and informative explanations from authoritative guides.

Space is limited so book early and avoid disappointment.

Monday **LIVING IN THE DESERT**
March 18
Survival in the desert depends on adaptation to the environment. From the Beduin to futuristic cities, this tour will expose us to the culture, the challenges, the human and wildlife elements. Shouldn't be missed.
NIS 175 (including lunch).
Tour guide: YONI SHAPIRO

Thursday **REDISCOVERING CAESAREA**
March 28
You may have been before but using new archeological methods, Herod's town has been rediscovered. He'd be happy to see it today. The beautiful bathing house, the hippodrome, the baths, the imperial storage rooms Herod's temple, and more.
NIS 155 (including lunch).
Tour guide: Archeologist AVNER GOREN

Saturday **THE CAPITAL'S WOMEN**
April 13
This Saturday morning walking tour features the women in our life. They've left their mark on the streets, the buildings and our history. From Heleni Hamalka, to Elizabeth Alexandrovitch, to Lea Abushdid to Anna Ticho. You'll meet them and more on an easy three hour walk. We meet in Jerusalem NIS 55
Tour guide: Frances Oppenheimer

The tour price for March 18 and 28 tours, includes transportation from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv and return, entrance to all sites, background lectures and on-the-spot explanations. Pickup and return, drop-off along the route when possible and arranged beforehand.

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Tel 02-666231 (9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.)
Ask for Romit or Tami.

Handwritten signature or stamp at the bottom center of the page.